

The SMART SET

*Edited by
George Jean Nathan
and
H.L. Mencken.*



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The SMART SET

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CONTENTS

A FABLE OF THESSALY	William M. Conselman	1
THREE SOLDIERS	Leonard Hall	2
CINDERELLA AND THE BEANSTALK (complete novelette)	Lilith Benda	3
THE DISTRESSING PREDICAMENT OF AN HONOURABLE LITTLE BOY	Ian MacKinnon	22
THE TRADITION OF THE HOUSE OF MONSIEUR	Maurice Davis	23
RÉPÉTITION GÉNÉRALE	H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan	29
THE MATCH	Lewis Brown	38
THE RENUNCIATION	L. M. Hussey	39
PATRON SAINTS	Hortense Flexner	48
MEN I HAVE PROPOSED TO MEDITATION	June Gibson	49
CORINNA AND HER MAN	Traver Briscoe	52
THE LEGEND OF MARGARET	Thyra Samter Winslow	53
LA BELLE HOBBS	Helen Woljeska	62
THE HUMAN BRAIN	John Chapin Mosher	63
THE DARDANELLES PUFF-BOX (one-act play)	Eugene Lyons	76
DILEMMA	J. R. Milne	77
LACE-LIKE LOVES OF CHILDHOOD	J. K. Nicholson	84
PANDORA	Nelson Antrim Crawford	84
SURVIVAL	Edith Chapman	85
AS WATER SPILLED ON THE GROUND	Muna Lee	92
THE KINGS	Virginia Terhune Van de Water	93
SHEEP-FACE II (essay)	Harold Cook	104
I HAVE NO WORD	Stephen Ta Van	105
FURLOUGH	David Morton	111
THE TRIUMPH	Clarkson Crane	113
POMMIERS NORMANDS (in the French)	Charles King Van Riper	123
THE LITERARY DRAMA	Yvonne Durand	129
MORE NOTES FROM A DIARY	George Jean Nathan	131
	H. L. Mencken	138

AND

HALF A HUNDRED BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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The SMART SET



A Fable of Thessaly

By William M. Conselman

NOW, they tell a tale in Thessaly about a man whose name was Cyrdides. He had been married but a short while when he was disturbed by the frequency of the quarrels between him and the woman of his choice. So, after he had given the matter much thought, he sought out the sage Corenius.

"Now, tell me, Corenius," quoth Cyrdides, "is it not meet that I should be master in my own household? Or shall I allow myself to be ruled by this woman?"

Corenius smiled wisely.

"Good Cyrdides," he said, "my advice to you is that you discover how

other men do, and guide yourself accordingly. Do you take a hundred pigeons and a team of oxen and journey through the land. Wherever you find a man and his wife, learn by diligent investigation who is in command. Where it is the woman, give her one of the pigeons; where the man, give him one of the oxen, and learn from him what you wish to know."

Some weeks later, Cyrdides passed the house of Corenius in an empty wagon drawn by two oxen.

"What," saith the sage, "and have you not started your journey yet?"

"Aye," answered Cyrdides. "I am going back for more pigeons."



Three Soldiers

By Leonard Hall

I

Private First Class Morton Hepp

MORTON,
When I have forgotten
Jess Willard, and Rabindranath Tagore,
And the taste of Chartreuse,
I shall still remember you.
For, from the stagnation of a training camp
You wrote an eight-page letter each night
For two hundred and seventy-five nights
To a girl named May
Whom you loved in 1917-1918.
Hail, Prince of Story-Tellers!

II

Private Alexander L. Pringle

Alec
Was tall, and angular, and lantern-jawed,
And king of our sporting fraternity.
One day he was crossing a Belgian turnip field,
And a machine gun bullet struck him in the stomach,
And he died.
His body is beneath a white cross
On the west bank of the Scheldt,
But Alec is down some celestial alley
Winning St. Peter's money
At ten-obol licks.

III

Sergeant Ezekiel Loftus Jackson

One June day,
On his way home from high school
Ezekiel heard a band and saw the flag.
He enlisted,
And after a year of bootlicking—
We had a better name in the Army—
He gained the right to order his betters
(There were many of us)
To dig a hole, and then
Fill it up again.

Cinderella and the Beanstalk

(A Complete Novelette)

By Lilith Benda

CHAPTER I

WHEN Langham Moore had stirred the logs in the fireplace to a blaze which dissipated the cheerlessness of his new abode, and sent the pungent aroma of burning pine to his nostrils, he looked speculatively about the room, finding himself more in accord with his changed plan of existence. In one corner he noted the upper part of a door looming above a chest of drawers that had been placed against it in unpicturesque fashion. When he had covered the defacement with a Japanese print, it struck him that life, after all, was not half bad. And when he had hung the precious Gauguin on a wall space advantageously lighted, and his own portrait of his uncle Johnnie, dear to him as the firstling of a rapidly increasing brood, over the brick fireplace where the flickers lighted the fine old face into a semblance of movement and life, he became conscious of a fellowship, unfamiliar for many months, stealing over him.

He pushed a couch across the room until it faced the flames, and threw himself indolently among the cushions—a tall, slight, rangy, lazy looking young man, just past the stripling stage, brown of hair and eyes and skin, and with features, upon them the stamp of an inherent naïveté unspoilt by early sophistication, almost uncannily like those in the portrait over the mantel. There was the same delicacy of contour, the same underlying virility, the same straightforward glance, high fore-

head, the same proud bearing and courtliness of aspect. But the white-haired man of the portrait seemed to exhale a calm detachment from the stress of existence utterly unlike the eagerness for all the world was yet to unfold which sparkled in his nephew's eyes. From the couch cushion the young man bestowed an affectionate look upon the painting.

An instant later, however, he turned away in annoyance. There was a formidable quality to his uncle's stoicism which provokes a fugitive longing for the swish of a woman's silks, which impelled him toward all that was light, transitory, colorful.

Orphaned in childhood, Langham Moore had spent his youth under the tutelage of that relative whom, at three, he had dubbed "Uncle Johnnie," an appellation inappropriate and almost irreverent to the gentleman's awe-inspiring dignity. Moore remembered how his kinsman's mild smile when first hailed as "Uncle Johnnie" had struck him as maddeningly characteristic. John Langham never disapproved of anything save what he termed "the chronic indignation of the world," and then so blandly, with such a serene detachment and unconcern as to make his disapprobation less forcible than the faintest protest. Voices were lowered respectfully at the mention of the Langham millions and the Langham ancestry.

And yet, a bachelor at sixty, their representative, once a renowned *homme de monde* and patron of the fine arts, lived in seclusion on an estate in the Ramapo hills, interested

only in his flower gardens, his Ayrshires and Airedales, his picture galleries, his books and his nephew. It had seemed to the boy, while from year to year he saw his uncle's face become more dispassionate, his uncle's smile chillier and gentler, that he was watching the attainment of a nirvana, an ultimate calm, immune to "the chronic indignation of the world," but tinged ever so slightly with the chill of the tomb.

Gradually he had discovered himself prey to a growing irritation against his uncle. Long years of close companionship had bound the two in that man-to-man affection than which there is no rarer or more potent tie. Still, approaching manhood, the boy revolted against the resignationism and lethargy in the air. His talent for painting was quickly recognized by his uncle. The older man extended sympathy and fine understanding. There were long art discussions which lasted sometimes from dusk until morning star. And yet the boy became ill at ease.

Moore's leanings toward exotic backgrounds and the purely decorative in art were what endeared Gauguin to him, and what caused him, too, long hours of miserable unrest, inasmuch as he realized that his was no expression of the æsthetic at its highest, that perhaps the longing to create was but a meretricious spur toward futile effort and an insignificant goal, that he was to be no pioneer in vast new fields nor yet the consummation of a period of strivings who bound up precursory gleanings into a rich and enduring oneness. Still this longing to create something, no matter how worthless, persisted even in the face of other divertent propensities. . . . In the first place, women tended sporadically to captivate.

As yet no adept at sentiment, youth and likability alone had turned his novitiate into a series of triumphs over more seasoned Lotharios—and Uncle Johnnie seemed to look a little askance

at women. Then, too, a grain of American aggressiveness in his make-up tempted him to a money-making career—and Uncle Johnnie would look faintly astonished when he voiced his discontent with purposeless leisure. And again, there were times when *Wanderlust* obsessed him, when he wanted to throw everything else aside, and succumb to a nostalgia for strange countries, to bask in the South Sea Islands or glimpse the midnight sun. . . .

All this, all these clashing, disquieting decoys he felt that his uncle, secure in a remote nirvana, could not quite understand. Love of romance and adventure urged him to leave the quiet of the Ramapo hills. The charm of the *imprévu* proved stronger than lethargic repose. He had often gone on brief sojourns which took him for several weeks at a time from his uncle's side. But one day abruptly he announced his intention of striking out for himself, packed his belongings, bought a ticket for New York. Without a trace of disapproval in the even, courtly tones, his uncle had bidden him godspeed.

As he lounged now before the fire, a frown of annoyance riddled his high forehead. He was reflecting upon how unsatisfactorily the determination to break from trammel had resolved itself. It was only two months since, arriving almost penniless in New York, he had acquainted himself with the indignities of hall-rooms and hash. During the first few weeks he did no more than dash off two magazine covers for *Mode*, a fashion periodical that had discarded pretty girl effects for bizarre color blendings and slant-eyed sirens. His contributions met with an enthusiastic reception and substantial cheques. Thereupon, abandoning the hall room, he hit quite accidentally upon the Cadigan *pension*, an establishment not to be termed a boarding house any more than was its drawing room a parlor, or its chatelaine, a massive dame with an instinct for the

rôle of professional hostess, a mere landlady.

Only that morning, in answer to an advertisement for "studio, bath, and board," he had met Mrs. Cadigan. She was a lady built on somewhat more than heroic proportions, tightly laced, of a chemically accentuated bloneness and rosiness, and garbed in the mountainous female's characteristic bright colors, turquoise jewelry, and rhinestone combs. But his first glance told him that though her attire might suggest to an untutored eye the caparisonment of the Paphian sisterhood, all the rhinestones in Christendom could not have erased from her the brand of the "perfect lady." She was like a huge, misshapen over-garnished birthday cake, which, even if displayed in a questionable bakery, would provoke no challenging sniff for poisonous flavorings from a health officer rampant on a pure-food campaign. She emitted a personality attune with her chastely tinted wall-papers and heavily napped Axminsters, with the drawing room's grand piano and Sheraton settee. She augured a cuisine inabusive to the palate. He was prone to overlook her dissertations upon a Miss Briggs and Mr. Meehan who "have been among us fifteen years," upon her niece whose husband was "a travelling gentleman with a travelling gentleman's failings," and who occupied with her four-year-old offspring "the two large, airy rooms and bath on the second floor," upon "the celebrated Miss Channing who is with us now."

When he saw that the studio advertised was a large skylight room well lighted for his work, he engaged it on the spot, had his baggage moved that afternoon, and dined at a restaurant, unwilling at once to risk the dinner-table after Mrs. Cadigan's numerous assertions that her tenants were "all like a cozy, little family, you know." . . . Now he lounged, half pleased, half discontented, on

the point of a doze. A discreet knocking aroused him.

Followed by her niece, a blonde and massive replica who led by the hand a querulous little boy, Mrs. Cadigan stood in the doorway. She held the copy of *Mode* whose cover he had designed, and he could see by the badly suppressed delight and excitement on her face how it had but recently dawned upon her that her house harbored a nephew of the world-renowned John Langham.

The unwarranted intrusion displeased him. He stiffened at the women's compliments, responded with a curt "some other time" to their entreaties that he "join us all in the drawing room—Miss Channing is going to play." The two appeared a trifle crushed by his chilly air, and beat a hasty retreat. Again he flung himself upon the couch, meditating upon just what it was that made the "perfect lady" type of female so objectionable. . . .

But only for a moment. From below presently there came sounds at which he started to his feet in dismay. He had become long since maddened by the inundation of quasi-Hawaiian music which infested the cafés and ballrooms where occasionally he spent an idle hour. Now someone was playing a prolonged hula-hula, enough to drive him to distraction. Indignantly he paced the floor until the music ceased, resolving, if it were resumed, that he would leave the next day. Within a few minutes there came a preliminary arpeggio. But the frown disappeared when he recognized the opening bars of a Chopin mazurka. The annoyance on his face changed to keen attention, to rapt interest, finally to open delight.

This, to be sure, was only Chopin in one of the less significant moments. But here was artistry. Here was musicianship. Here was music curiously at odds with his preconceived idea of the Cadigan personnel.

His uncle's training enabled him to appreciate at their intrinsic worth the rare touch, the rich tone, the technical strength and sure control of the pedals, and, particularly, the Slavic temper in the playing.

"Miss Channing is going to play." As he recalled the words his eyes lighted. In a flash the young man who had lounged lazily before the fire became a being alert for adventure. In a flash he fell under the spell of the *imprévu*. A prospect hazily inviting and near at hand drove him to the door. He felt that more than the longed-for swish of silks awaited him in the drawing-room below. In a moment he was hurrying down the heavily carpeted stairs.

CHAPTER II

MIDWAY upon the lower flight he paused when the mazurka came to an end. Through the drawing-room portières he could see only the mountainous aunt and niece, with the latter's four-year-old wriggling upon a maternal knee. Mrs. Cadigan's silky tones sounded above a murmur at the other end of the room. "Play the Hesitation Blues, Miss Channing."

Immediately the person at the piano broke into a syncopated hodge-podge, executed with the requisite ragtime swing, and capped at the finish by an extemporaneous bit of difficult bravura at which the young man on the stairway started in perplexity. He was about to step down into the room when a feminine voice, which rang out startlingly, halted him.

"Now Oswald must sing us 'The Sunshine of Your Smile.'"

It was a strange voice, a deep, beautiful contralto with a vibrant ring like the peal of a great bell. The voice of a foreigner, it seemed to him, about it an indeterminate quality that thwarted any attempt definitely to place it as the voice of youth or maturity. The Cadigan gush rose in response, intermingled with two other

voices, male and female, precise and stilled. It was apparent to Moore that the child who squirmed with many an "aw" and "naw" in his proud mother's arms was being urged to a display of talent. Averse to the idea of an infant prodigy's effusions, he remained somewhat reluctantly on the stairway . . . when of a sudden a young woman flashed for an instant upon the scene, caught Oswald from his mother's knee, tossed him high into the air, and bore him away to where, ostensibly, the piano stood.

Moore stepped resolutely down the steps, his quick tread proclaiming zest for a new and promising escapade. For momentary though it had been, this glimpse of a creature swift-moving and lithe; of the flash of white teeth and dark eyes against a richly tinted tawnniness, this fleeting, confused impression of an audacity, a repose, a splendid savagery, was enough, so abruptly had it been terminated, to stimulate even in the most impassive of beings a desire for a more prolonged contemplation of the lady's indubitable charms. From the piano there issued an introductory chord. He pushed aside the portières.

"Mr. Moore!"

The unexpected sight of him startled Mrs. Cadigan into her rôle of professional hostess. Flushing a more vivid pink, she almost slipped from her grand manner into the obsequiousness of a plebeian landlady, before a star boarder, when she rose to make the introductions. He found himself bowing to a Miss Briggs and a Mr. Meehan, a somewhat faded and nondescript pair who occupied the place of honor on the Sheraton settee. Then—"and Miss Channing," the lady went on. He turned to the figure seated at the piano to meet a pair of extraordinarily large and protuberant and flashing black eyes, about which, for all his certainty that he had never seen them before, there was a something vague-

ly and puzzlingly familiar. He was on the point of seating himself near the piano when Mrs. Cadigan, in a misguided attempt to put a newcomer at ease by extolling his accomplishments, indicated the copy of *Mode* on the table, and informed her guests that the cover was the work of their new fellow-lodger. At the chorus of compliments that arose from all except the woman at the piano, Moore reddened slightly, and half resuming his chilly manner, half in lazy unconcern, began to edge doorwise. The vibrant contralto checked his flight.

"A bit *d'après Gauguin-y*,"—he wheeled to see her point to the magazine—"Don't you think?"

There was that in her radiant smile which compelled him to defer his exit. "A bit," he answered easily, "but without the perpendicularities."

"Without the perpendicularities," she returned. "Oh, undeniably!" And as if well aware that it was she who held him in the room, she waved him with a triumphant flourish of proprietorship to the chair beside her. Perfectly at ease now, he leaned toward her. "Miss—er—"

"Channing," she put in, "Edith Channing."

"Miss Channing, haven't I seen you, or your picture or something somewhere?"

"Doubtless," she nodded, "I'm Cinderella, you know." Without further elucidation, she drew the infant Oswald from a corner where he was shifting embarrassedly from one foot to the other. "Now, Mr. Moore, you shall hear our household pride sing 'The Sunshine of Your Smile.'" Lightly she ran her fingers over the keys.

The fidgeting youngster lifted his voice then in lisping, squealing injunction to some unknown to

"Give me your smile,

The love light in your eyes—"

It seemed to Moore that there was an element of *lèse-majesté* in the woman's stooping to the rendition of

the song's banal accompaniment. Still he welcomed the child's performance in that it gave him an opportunity the more deliberately to study Miss Channing.

He was struck by a baffling element in her appearance. She irradiated a commingling of fantastically incongruous attributes.

As his eyes swept the erect form that displayed to supreme advantage a russet gown embroidered in amber and burnt orange, with the stamp of the pre-eminent modiste upon its fashionable lines, it occurred to him that her one actual claim to beauty was in the mould of her faultless figure. The waving mass of coal black hair was of too coarse a texture, the face and lips a trifle too full, the nose a trifle too large and retroussé, the teeth and eyes far too big, the cheekbones too high, the eyebrows, groomed into the sheen of a blackbird's wing, too heavy for symmetry. There was no just balancing of the various features.

And yet these very imperfections served but to accentuate the charm, at once regal and bizarre, of the ensemble effect. The rich crimson tints in the dark skin and vivid scarlet of her full lips, the gleam of the protuberant eyes, the quick flash and instantaneous disappearance of her smiles, all gave her a coruscant allure which intrigued him. Oswald was finishing the chorus after the first verse with a plea for "the right to love you all the while," when this smile flashed, and disappeared. In his chair Moore stirred, taken aback by the surprising change which fell over her face while it was settling into repose.

As if a picture, the work of a representative of a certain school, had been deliberately painted over by an artist of clashing ideals into a representation of another and very different school, and the task had been clumsily performed, so that in spots, where traces of the first painting still asserted themselves, an effect was produced which neither artist had

striven for, so, it seemed to Moore while he watched the woman's smile abruptly disappear, there was something a little set and precise in the fold of her lips, something at odds with all her resplendence suggested, something which explained her presence in the Cadigan fold, which made her rendition of the mazurka tally with the ragtime and the maudlin song, which almost put upon her the "perfect lady" brand that lay over the other women—which, however, antedated her charms only as effectually as if a Renoir nude had been decently draped by a Leighton, who, by bungling his job, unconsciously wrought a not altogether disagreeable transformation. It was in the faint shadows beneath her eyes, in a just perceptible droop of the lids and lips that he thought to see the result of two clashing personalities—the one, temporarily laid aside, of the girl who had played the mazurka, the other that of a woman who abetted a squealing youngster in an unpardonable affront to the tympanum.

*"My world fore-e-ver,
The sunshine of your smile!"*

The room resounded with applause.

From the piano the woman darted him a quick, curious glance.

Little Oswald responded to his aunt's reminder to "make your bow prettily" with an awkward bob, then trotted from one person to the other depositing a moist salute on every cheek.

Not osculatorily inclined, Moore ventured a handshake. With relief he watched the blonde and billowy ones bear their pride from the room. Only the two on the Sheraton settee remained, deep in whispered confab. He was eager to direct his attentions solely to the woman beside him. The big eyes shone invitingly. With deliberation he rose, and pushed his chair closer to the piano.

"What did you mean by saying you were Cinderella?"

"Just what I said." Apparently surprised at the question, she handed him the fashion magazine. "I'm Cinderella—Hermine's Cinderella . . . surely you know."

Puzzled and curious he scanned the pages. But his attention was distracted when she turned back to the piano and began to play a bit by Brahms, a little waltz pervaded by the Magyar spirit, and interpreted with true Hungarian abandon, tempered by unerring artistry.

When it was finished, "Are you a Brahmsianer?" she asked.

Then, without turning her head to meet his answer, "You know Conrad, of course," she went on. "Ever strike you how alike they are, Conrad and old Johannes? The same reserve, the same austerity and grandeur, the same intensity and color and remoteness, the same—how shall I say?—seething dispassionateness, the same flair for the exotic. Seems to me that Conrad penetrates the spirit of his Malays and Congo tribes and things very much as my Johannes does the Magyar. Seems to me that the two may be coupled, just as their vulgar cousins, Liszt and Kipling, may be coupled. Does it strike you so?"

The vibrant contralto fell into silence. On the Sheraton settee the faded pair continued their low-voiced colloquy. Moore leaned forward in his chair the more readily to catch a glimpse of the woman's averted eyes. An untamed effulgence about her aroused a response on his part already more than mere interest. Hers was a tremendous appeal to the senses counterbalanced by a certain tranquillity which reminded him slightly of his uncle Johnnie. He felt at ease, soothed as well as stimulated, already eager to win her and at the same time a bit in the mood for a discussion on books and music like those he had had with the calm old man deserted in the Ramapo hills.

"Those who disparage Wilde as a dilettante," he answered after a pause, "must remember that Wilde,

the critic, prophesied Conrad when he said that the coming men who would stir the world by fiction must either get a new background for their stuff or else—else 'reveal the soul of man in its inner-workings,' I think it was. Do you recall it, Miss—er—” When she turned her face to him, her name struck him as so incompatible with the stamp of foreign extraction on her features that he stumbled over it, and inadvertently voiced a doubt. “Channing isn't really your name, is it?”

There was an instant's hesitation. “Yes, indeed. Mine by right of my having chosen it, assumed it, appropriated it. The name parentally imposed was far too outlandish. Let it suffice that it's not Draga or Sigurd or Mitzi, on the one hand, nor Myrtle or Maisie on the other. It brings memories of a shoddy childhood in a Western mining town. So I'll not tell it.”

“Tell me at least,” he urged. “You're surely not American, nor Polish, for all that Mazur swing. What then? Hungarian, Ru—”

“Does it matter?” she cut in, hurriedly. “Besides I hardly know—I'm a hybrid without a pedigree. But offsetting that—turn that page,” she commanded, pointing to the periodical—“offsetting that, I'm Cinderella, Hermine's Cinderella—a personage!”

“Ah!” As he lowered his eyes from her face to the page, all that seemed puzzlingly familiar about her explained itself. Profusely illustrated by many photographs, he saw an account, entitled “Hermine's Opening,” of a prominent modiste's exhibition of midwinter fashions. And looking from picture to picture, he recognized, here in a trotteur frock, there in a negligée or evening wrap, the audacious eyes and beautiful form of Edith Channing.

Indignantly he laid the book aside. It seemed high treason to the woman's elemental splendor of aspect, to the power which gave her such mastery over the piano, thus to have per-

mitted herself to become no more than a model for a Fifth Avenue dress-maker. “*Lèse-majesté*,” he thought again. Aware that a comment was expected, without quite knowing what to say, “Why Cinderella?” he asked, “you don't look the part.”

The smile gleamed and vanished. “An affectation of Hermine's. She rechristens all her models fantastically. We've a big Valkyrish blonde who is Weia Waga, and a Phryne, an Isis, a Yaha. I was shabby when I applied for work. She tried me out in an awfully outré evening gown. Partly because of the sudden transformation, partly because she thought that I could carry off equally well a demure frock or a dazzling creation, she called me Cinderella. The name caught the popular fancy and I'm almost famous now.”

His boyish impetuosity broke through the restraints of politeness. All this was nothing short of sacrilege. “How could you?” he cried; “you with your looks and your talent, you with your taste for music and literature—”

“Literature?” she broke in. “My dear boy, we models at Hermine's are authorities on *Town Topics*, *Broadway Brevities*, and *Jim Jam Jems*.”

Still he refused to be mollified. “How could you? What made you—”

“Forty dollars a week, and a good bit extra each month for the photos!” She spoke so sharply that he was silenced. “That's what made me. Try to understand, Mr. Moore—” her voice fell and she turned to him with a hint of sadness in her eyes—“Two years ago I was practising a Bach fugue on a tinny piano in a shabby furnished room—and I hadn't my room rent, nor my piano rent, and I was virtually in tatters—hungry, too. There was a dreadful mirror near the piano. Look at it one way and it gave a good reflection, but look at it the wrong way and you became all warped, and gnarled, and funny. To keep up courage I'd been thinking of a career, thinking of making a

début in flame-colored chiffon cut very low, and electrifying a vast audience into frantic applause. Well, I happened to look at the mirror the wrong way. What I saw was a gaunt hag making a début in seemly homespun that hid her bones. I did some quick thinking, then. My figure!—oh, my figure!—Oh! my figure! . . . so it went for an hour. And the figure won out. You see, I'd conceived of music as something inextricably mixed with everything that seemed beautiful—with happiness and romance, and lovely frocks, even . . . laugh if you will! And I came down to earth just in time. No melodramatic renunciation, mind you, no burning of the music sheets and such stuff. But I got me my job, became the best paid model in New York—"

"Became Cinderella," he finished for her when she paused.

Without answering, she continued to look at him while slowly her face assumed a new solemnity. He saw a dawning wonderment, a happy surprise, a deep seriousness steal into the dark eyes. He felt that this was the outset of a strange and delightful experience. In puerile fashion he was building air castles. Already this woman was catalogued in his consciousness as the heroine of a forthcoming romance which overshadowed already all the trifling intrigues that had gone before, and were to follow this, a crowning event. It was quite natural that she whom he had known scarce a half-hour should stand to him already in the light of a creature long cherished, that very soon he might expect. . . . "I'm twenty-five"—her murmur tore him from the air castles—"How old are you?"

"Twenty-six," he lied.

"I'm twenty-five," she announced again, a moment later, "and you're the first person I've ever met whom it's possible to talk to." After a continuous glance at the Sheraton settee, "I'm twenty-five," she reiterated,

"and I've never been kissed. Does that astound you?"

Such a statement was blasphemous to the curled, scarlet lips. But the faint little droop of her eyelids and mouth gave to her face an austerity which prevented him from telling her so. "There was a foreman," she continued, "at the mines out West, who wanted to marry me. He was greasy and wore celluloid collars. . . . Since I came to New York the girls at Hermine's have taken me on a few revels in private dining-rooms, a few bachelor apartment shindies. Some of the men were silly dotards, some likable boys, but they were one and all good things, live ones, fox trotters, wine openers—and that let them out."

Her elbows on her knees, her chin cushioned in her hands, she appeared to muse, inadvertently almost, as if hardly aware of his presence, to voice memories as she recalled them, and express half-formulated ideas. "I became Cinderella—but by a favor of the gods there was no fairy godmother, no prince, no glass slipper. Cinderella of the glass slipper was a silly miss . . . 'Cinderella and the Beanstalk' would tell my tale. You know, Mr. Moore, the beanstalk hero should have been a woman. The story teems with woman philosophy. Once a man climbs the ladder that leads to the heights, it's against the very spirit which drove him there to bring his treasures down to earth, no matter how loudly a giant may roar a 'Fee, fi, fo, fum.' He gets kicked off usually without the hen that lays the golden eggs, and the money bags, and the harp—yet nothing could induce him to chop down the beanstalk. It takes female effrontery, female shrewdness, female immunity to mountain peak ecstasy and all that, gracefully to descend. . . . Well, I accomplished the feat. I—"

"Play 'Poet and Peasant,' dear."

Moore was indignant at the abrupt interruption. It came from the wom-

an on the settee, a sour-visaged spinster in purple flannel whom he had noticed but cursorily before, and whose attitude toward the bald-headed nonentity at her side was one of absolute proprietorship. Sullenly he leaned back in his chair, his annoyance increased by the fact that Miss Channing seemed almost to welcome the diversion, met it with a gay, "Poet and Peasant, by all means!" and broke out forthwith into a vile, showy paraphrase, replete with trills and runs and smashing chords.

Presently he saw that she was looking at him in amusement. Through the clamor of a chromatic passage played *fortissimo*, he caught her whisper. "Don't scowl so," it admonished; "you should respect Miss Briggs. She at least remains true to her ideals. Teaches Victorian poetry in a high school. Reflects the fine, academic spirit. Considers the glossaries and chronological tables far greater achievement than the works they supplement, you know. She'll tell you many times while you're here that line 90 of 'The Lotus Eaters' originally had eyelids for eyelid . . ."

The piano passage led to a variation in octaves.

He rose to stand beside her while the whispers went on: "Mr. Meehan is very much the gentleman. Sells standard authors on the installment plan. He and Miss Briggs have spent an hour on that settee every evening for the last fifteen years. . . ." A tricky trill in thirds occupied her for a time. Then, imitating Mrs. Cadigan's honeyed utterance, "We're all like a cozy little family," she pursued, "but 'ware Oswald's mother! Oswald's a Cæsarean—" at his puzzled look her lips curled—"I refer to his arrival into this world—and Oswald's mother expatiates!" The melody was expressing itself in tremolo now. "We have our moments of excitement, too. Oswald is subject to the croup. We're dreadfully agitated when he has an attack—meet at his bedside

in negligée while I administer Miss Briggs' remedy. . . ." She dinned his ears with the long passage in chords that terminated the number, and smiled her appreciation of the compliments issuing from the enthusiastic pair.

Again he felt baffled while he watched her. Again he sensed about her an ingredient alien to all she suggested as she sat there, opulently lovely, apparently a-teem with animation, irradiate of a high spirited eagerness for all that life might bring. Again he thought to detect an impalpable hint of the "perfect lady." It seemed to become more pronounced with the little gasp of astonishment that escaped her when Miss Briggs and Mr. Meehan rose from the corner, bade them a prim "Good-night," and left the room.

"That's the first time," she commented, "since I've been here that they've gone upstairs before half-past nine. They've deserted the Sheraton settee in our favor—an epoch-making readjustment of the Cadigan régime!"

"Miss Briggs is a maiden lady," he put in, anxious to resume a conversational intimacy cut short by the request for "Poet and Peasant." "Horrid term, maiden lady. Let's not discuss her."

"Undeniably a maiden lady," she agreed. "Horrid term, to be sure, but I'm one too, you know." Her lips folded into the precise line which seemed almost to neutralize her charms. "A maiden lady with a maiden lady's usual secret ambition to marry and settle down."

He was given no time to answer, no time even to digest the rather startling statement.

She caught the copy of *Mode* from the table.

"Look! Here are my pictures among the pages devoted exclusively to fashions. Here's a section on the stage. And here's the first page, always the picture of some woman of affluence and prestige. . . . Well, very

soon I'll appear as a stage-beauty—I'm soon to sign a contract. . . . And sooner or later I intend to be on that front page, featured as the bride of some man, I don't much care who, save that I shan't go a vestal to the arms of a wine opener, save that I want to be able to sport Doucets and Drécolls to my soul's content, and play Beethoven at times in a room all marbles and tapestries and lineage and things."

She left the piano stool, and walked slowly toward the door with him at her side. Midway across the room she paused. "Three stages to my career, you see, just as there were three successive trips in the beanstalk, the first for the hen, the second for the money bags, the third—" her voice became a sort of croon—"simply for a harp. Then the axe to the beanstalk!"

Banteringly she looked at him, and before the ardor in his eyes, hers wavered, and blinked as if she were dazzled by a sudden inundation of light.

For some time the two stood looking a little blankly at one another. He noted on her face what seemed a young girl's confused wonderment before a joyous firstness of things. He felt as if he and she were alone in a great stillness fraught with promise all the more beautiful because hardly definite enough to augur fulfillment. So swiftly had the onrush carried him away that he felt this the fit moment for protestations and pleadings.

He stumbled a step toward her. He was about to speak, about to catch her to him, here, in this room where the proprieties reigned, where the indentation left by a maiden lady's back on a sofa cushion bade him desist—when she folded her hands.

The gesture arrested him—broke the spell. At once it evoked a fugitive memory of a picture—was it a Rembrandt?—a picture of an old and worn-out woman with clasped hands,

a woman who had put behind her, with a lifetime of toil, all the stress of joys and sorrows, who contemplated the antics of the less wise with an emotionless and kindly unconcern.

The hands Edith Channing had folded were the hands of a pianist, large and strong, with enlarged knuckles, bulging muscles, blunted finger tips.

Had she too put behind her all concern with the roseate and rankling?

It awed a little, it stirred him to compassion thus to see this gesture of world weariness stamp with a strange poignancy the almost infantile blink of her great eyes.

"The axe to the beanstalk!" She stepped toward the door.

Cool and even now, her chiseled tones reminded him dimly of something, of some one. "Commendable in theory at least—my principles, don't you think? For after all, the crazy flounderings of humanity resolve themselves at their sanest in some such solution of the problem: how to be happy though alive."

"You're a good bit like my Uncle Johnnie." The words escaped him just when, from the hall, she threw him another smile before mounting the stairway.

CHAPTER III

EXISTENCE in the Cadigan *pension* maintained itself in unruffled fashion. Little out of the ordinary happened. Everyone was low voiced and well mannered. Each morning at a quarter of nine Miss Briggs departed for the high school, Mr. Meehan for business, Oswald for kindergarden, Miss Channing for Hermine's. Each evening at seven they met at the dinner table and assembled later in the drawing room, where Miss Channing played and Oswald varied "The Sunshine of Your Smile," with "My Old Kentucky Home," and "The Holy City." By half past ten all was still.

A week after Moore had joined the circle that was so "like a cozy little family, you know," Miss Briggs had informed him twice that line 90 of "The Lotus Eaters" originally had "eyelids" for "eyelid," and Mrs. Cadigan's niece had solemnly confided to him that Oswald was a Cæsarean, and subject to the croup. He grew to understand why Miss Channing had been so perturbed when the drab looking pair left the Sheraton settee before half past nine. It was a startling deviation from the established régime, and to a seasoned lodger any deviation was almost as startling as if the hall clock that tolled out set hours for set occupations were to strike thirteen.

Time went on, however, and every evening at nine the drawing room was deserted by all but himself and the dark-eyed young woman of the brilliant smiles. He would look forward all day to that hour alone with her. Almost upon meeting her she had become a dominant interest. Still he resented the attitude of the "cozy little family" group.

When he had been a month among them it dawned on him that there was match-making in the air. Miss Channing and Mr. Moore were personages; Miss Channing and Mr. Moore were young and handsome; Miss Channing and Mr. Moore must mate—so it seemed to go.

On all sides he met arch glances, coy smiles, genteel intimations somewhat akin to the smirks and smudges of the frankly boorish at a rustic betrothal party. The idiots incensed him. Edith Channing, to be sure, was bewitching, but he resented the attitude of the others, and resented the way she seemed blithely to accept it as if she too conformed to their code. Moreover, he had a marked aversion to marriage.

In half-hearted fashion he dashed off another magazine cover, pocketed the cheque, and realizing how deeply he was becoming involved in a quagmire of indolence, became thoroughly disgusted with himself. He felt no

longing to create something worthwhile, no spur to achievement. All that he had determined to accomplish when he left his uncle became as nothing before the appeal of a woman whose very name he did not know, a woman who bore herself like an empress and hailed from a mining town, who combined the attributes of an enchantress of men with virginal bewilderment and an old woman's world weariness, who played Chopin like a man, Bach like a musician, and was celebrated as "Hermine's Cinderella," a woman whose eyes softened when she looked at him, who irradiated a new tenderness, and smiled less often now.

He strove without avail to reconcile the conflicting elements which she seemed to exhale. With each passing day his curiosity augmented. And often it seemed to him that nothing so definitely expressed her as her likeness, which struck him when they first met, to a picture painted over by an unsympathetic hand. A desire absorbed him to erase the surface painting, to tear away the acquired personality.

Edith Channing, however, despite the new note of tenderness, never swerved from the plans she had confided to him. The next step of her career seemed on the eve of accomplishment. One day she returned to the house in fine fettle, waving a type-written sheet.

"My contract, Lang! Everything's arranged. I'm to appear, not as the star, but far more important, as the star show girl of a new *revue*, the most prominent figure in the big ensembles, the girl who comes out as Columbia at the finish—you know. . . . Pose against a Joseph Urban background, say a few lines, do a few swaying dance steps. Hermine's Cinderella is so well known that I'm to be Cinderella in the *revue*—in the first act, among the embers, barefoot, and in a scanty frock of chiffon tatters; in the second act in a gown all crystal and flame color, the most gor-

geous creation imaginable! And I'll see that my photos appear in the stage section of *Mode* soon. Oh, everything is turning out exactly as I wanted it to, youngster!"

She had developed a habit of calling him "youngster"—a habit which displeased him inasmuch as it seemed to relegate him to the ranks of the impossibly callow, and invest her with an unapproachable maturity. His very anxiety to play the man of the world before her led him to incoherent stammers and the maneuvers of a schoolboy. All his attempts to bring affairs to a more intimate status failed before her good-humored raillery.

Often after they parted each evening he would watch her with reproach in his eyes, open the door next to his—then enter his room in a splenetic mood to sit sulking before the fire, glancing at intervals toward the door which showed above the chest of drawers. In a sentimental temper of mind he had taken down the Japanese print. The sight alone of the door which separated them seemed to bring her nearer to him.

So it went on from week to week. Each morning at a quarter of nine Miss Briggs departed for the high school, Mr. Meehan for business, Oswald for kindergarten, the woman who played Chopin like a man, and Bach like a musician, for Hermine's. Each evening they met at dinner and assembled later in the drawing room, where Miss Channing favored with "Poet and Peasant" and Oswald burst into song. . . .

Miss Channing's serenity, however, was perhaps ever so slightly disturbed. And Langham Moore acknowledged himself in a state of maddening suspense.

CHAPTER IV

ONE evening when he found himself particularly depressed, the mood was intensified by his fellow tenants' concern over Miss Channing's unwonted absence from the dinner

table. It was her custom punctually to arrive ten minutes before the meal was announced. And Mrs. Cadigan's maternal solicitude over this non-appearance, Oswald's lisping conjectures, the anxiety of Miss Briggs and Mr. Meehan, antiphonally voiced, all expressed so forcibly a legitimate interest in what, to Moore, was no affair of theirs, all conveyed so subtly the conviction that Miss Channing, despite an incompatible exterior, was wrought of the same mold as they, that the dinner table small talk grated, galled, and, together with his own hankering for the sound of her mellow contralto, conduced to a well-nigh unendurable dejection.

Little animation evinced itself in the gathering around the closed piano after dinner. For some twenty minutes before bearing her offspring off to bed, Oswald's mother worried volubly over his pallor and hoarseness. Miss Briggs and Mr. Meehan held the Sheraton settee, while Moore, anxious to outstay them, yawned over a newspaper, and fidgeted in his chair. At nine o'clock after condoling with him in a simpering way that increased his irritation, the two departed.

He lighted a cigarette only to toss it away without a puff. He opened the piano and with one finger picked out a few Ring motifs, returned to the newspaper for some five minutes, and spent another ten in formulating a grim resolve no longer to idle, to start the very next day on a reduction of his theories to canvas that would arouse not only the world but perhaps even his impassive kinsman in the Ramapo hills.

And again, when the figure of his uncle loomed into his consciousness, he was struck by the way it seemed at once to evoke Edith Channing. Both, he felt, were essential to his scheme of existence, both seemed at once remote and near, both stirred him, by the measure of aloofness in their rapport with him, to exasperation. The desire to work

left him as suddenly as it had come. For another half-hour he lounged morosely on the settee. . . . Then Edith Channing came in.

The dark red and black fur of her costume accentuated the crimson of her cheeks and sparkle in her eyes. She was in high spirits, in a state of almost feverish jubilation. "Threw up my job to-day," she announced, sweeping across the room. "That stage of the game, please Heaven, is done and over with!"

It seemed to Moore that never before had she irradiated such a degree of elemental grandeur, of impetuous, savage splendor as now, in the toss of her head and ring of her glorious voice. "Quit this morning," she pursued. "Rehearsals began at ten, and I've spent the day learning what upper right and lower left mean, and discovering that a stage director may actually be unoriginal enough to tell the chorus to put more ginger in it. . . . And oh, Lang, my photos are to be featured in next month's *Mode*. I had a bit of pull, and managed it just as I'd planned. Everything's coming out exactly as I'd planned! I've made the two strikes and the third will follow soon! And I feel so—so triumphant, so gorgeously triumphant! I feel like playing the Hammerklavier Sonata, and playing it devilishly well. Shall I?"

The excited light in her eyes softened, deepened, and her smile died when she turned to him. "Don't look so unhappy, youngster. What's there to be unhappy about? Don't you want me to play for you? . . . Not after all the Hammerklavier, but the andante from the Brahms thing, the '*Der Abend dämmert, das Mondlicht scheint*', andante—you know. Shall I play it for you, Lang, dear?"

At his nod her smile gleamed, but even more fleetingly than usual transforming itself on the instant into that precise fold of the lips which seemed almost to actuate her buoyancy with an element of drab prudery. She moved away from the piano, "Can't

play after all. I forgot that it's after hours. If I disturbed the peace of the household after ten o'clock, I'd just about miss being asked to leave."

He made no comment, and although her lips parted in an attempt to break the silence, they closed without a word. For some time she stood staring a little vacantly at him. Upon her face he saw a maternal gentleness blent with a young girl's timidity. About her there was the allure of the unattainable, but of an unattainable that seemed ardently to beseech him for deliverance from the bonds that put her out of his reach.

He could see that she was keenly alive to his hurt, eager to assuage, eager to surrender. The color deepened in her cheeks. Her hands quivered as if she were about to stretch them out to him. She swayed slightly toward him. . . . But before he could put in a word, again the lips narrowed into the line he found so unbeautiful. Hurriedly she crossed the room and went up the stairs.

It was some time before he followed, prey to a heavy gloom, at the same time aware of a new invigoration. For to him that flutter of her hands and slight sway had betrayed a momentous turning point. Affairs were approaching a crisis, and he was almost sure now that eventually she would not deny herself to him. As he reached the upper landing, Miss Briggs' door, which was to the left of his, opened. Mrs. Cadigan emerged, beaming upon him, and he caught, too, a glimpse of the school teacher deep in her text books at a study table. The very sight of these two deepened a growing certainty that for all the prim fold of her lips, Edith Channing's fate would not lead her to wedlock or spinsterdom.

Entering his room, he found himself averse to the idea of sleep. He stirred up the fire, flung himself upon the couch, and stared rather hopefully at the door that loomed above the chest of drawers. As once more he recalled that sudden deep-

ening of color in her cheeks, the realization that affairs were hanging in a balance favorable to him, eased to such an extent that after some fifteen minutes of musing he yawned in content, his eyelids lowered, and, too lazy to leave the couch, he dozed off before the fire. . . .

The clock striking two half awakened him. He stretched out his arms indolently, turned on his side, and was floating in that state of well-being which just precedes a loss of consciousness . . . when a sound bestirred him, a faint, faraway rattling and jangling, it seemed at first. He sat up, blinking sleepily. Again the sound. . . . Was it the cautious rattling of a knob? Was it the slight jangling of a bunch of keys? Did it come from Edith Channing's room?

Thoroughly aroused, he sat bolt upright, his eyes fixed upon the door. There was an unmistakable rattling of the knob, then the sound of a key withdrawn, then silence. After a little, he heard the jangling again, again a key was inserted, and subsequently withdrawn. He waited in eager suspense while two more were tried without avail. At the fifth attempt, after another cautious rattling, he saw the door open an inch, to strike softly against the back of the chest of drawers. Instantly he hurried across the room. Through the aperture her smile greeted him.

"Push that thing out of the way," she whispered, "and very carefully, so that they won't hear downstairs—don't let it scrape against the floor."

When the opening widened to a foot, she thrust her head through. A mass of black hair hung over her shoulders. Her cheeks were extraordinarily flushed, her eyes extraordinarily bright. "I knew you'd still be up. Happened to find a key that fit. Had to see you, Lang, and couldn't risk coming through the hall. I've lots to explain. . . . Push it just a bit further, another inch—so!" She slipped through and came to his side.

A silken robe colored in deep blues

and greens was wrapt about her, and her ankles showed above bou-doir slippers. The room she came from was unlighted. From the windows, open for the night, a chill draught blew over the two that stamped with a certain eeriness this meeting in the still hours of the night. While in confusion they looked away from each other, the draught closed the door—closed it with a slight bang. Both started. He noticed that on this side the knob had been removed in order that the chest might be placed close against the door. He made a hesitant step towards her, only to halt when her lips parted.

"I came because I couldn't sleep, because I couldn't bear to think of your being unhappy, because there are things to be explained, and—and—" in a little break, the whisper became almost inaudible—"Because it's so wonderful to watch your eyes light up when you see me, youngster."

She looked at him through lowered lids in that inscrutable way which held him off, and at the same time seemed to plead for release from all that forced her to put him out of mind. He found himself for some inexplicable reason unable to speak, to meet her eyes, to do anything except venture another step. This time without a word she walked swiftly away to the fireplace and stood looking up at his uncle's portrait, over which the flames cast a ruddy glow.

The old man appeared to contemplate her with a sort of sceptical kindness. For a long time she stood without moving a muscle, until it seemed to Moore that she was no more alive than the figure in the picture. And just as always, the thought of his uncle had linked itself so oddly with his every thought of her, as now his eyes shifted from the cool and courtly John Langham to this woman a-teem with youth and animation, this woman with flushed cheeks and gleaming eyes, with warmly tinted arms and

ankles, of a sudden it occurred to him that the same seal stamped the two. He was struggling definitely to discover wherein the strange likeness lay when she turned away from the picture.

"World-sorrow," she said simply, and sank among the cushions before the fire.

Thinking to mark a softening of her attitude, hastily he joined her. He was very much in love now, very deeply under the spell of her loveliness, very eager in his young impetuosity to have done with all quibbling—clumsy, too, embarrassed, awkwardly ardent. And yet the sheer force of his youth, and naïveté, and charm offset the callow gaucherie. The woman smiled, laid a hand over his. . . . But at the touch of her cool fingers he felt a pang of resentment. For to the gesture there was an emotionless quality which prepared him for her tranquil manner, and even, almost steely tones when presently she began to speak:

"This can't go on, Lang. That's mainly why I came in to-night—to make you understand. You're just the age and just the kind, and in just the mood to be carried away by a woman. And I'm not the least bit keen to play the siren. Too tempestuous and tiring, that sort of thing. While as for marriage, can you imagine anything more spirit blighting than being *soigneuse*, on the one hand, or having you tied to my apron strings on the other? I've laid my plans carefully, dear. You don't fit in with them, and I won't switch from them, depend on that."

Before his hurt look her face changed. When finally she went on, there was no steeliness in her voice, only a troubled eagerness to make clear the misgivings that assailed:

"Try to understand, dear. Remember that for twenty years I was well acquainted with poverty, and toil, and hunger—with the parental diatribe and the parental wallop. And remember that right through all the

shoddiness, there was the lure of music and of everything else that seemed beautiful—romance, lovers, clothes, luxury, the material all inextricably hodge-podged with the illusion—all leading me on. Why, when I was first able to take music lessons at fifty cents per, I'd grind out 'Hail, Columbia!' and 'The Old Oaken Bucket,' and sense the masters of whom I'd only heard, sort of sense them in the air somehow. And when I first met you, you weren't a stranger. Why, it was you who made me laugh in the foreman's face when he proposed. Remember that music was to effect the release from all the sordidness. There was to be a grand emancipation! Music would break the trammels! Remember, Lang, that since I was a tot all this led me on."

She paused. Not by a quiver of a muscle did she stir from her immobility, but a lifelessness fell over her attitude that heralded the flat, inflexionless voice with which she pursued:

"And remember that I saw myself in a mirror one day, growing bony, growing sallow—and already past twenty-two. Then I saw that I'd have to pay the price for material benefits by foregoing the big, stirring things. With the career, went all desire for affairs of the heart, for at the awakening the heroine of an amour became no more than a week-end sweetie somehow—and such prospects repelled. The best that could be effected was a shabby compromise. The very fibre of a man in such a dilemma would have prevented him from taking a sensible course. But by the grace of the gods, I was made of lesser stuff, of saner stuff, and chose the wiser way."

She held her hands set before her with the fingers outstretched into a Bach that might easily span an octave and three keys—looked meditatively at the misshapen knuckles, shrugged her shoulders, settled back among the cushions, and continued:

"Don't fancy for a second that I dupe

myself by thinking that interpretative talent is high art, or that one of the Olympians was lost to the world when I gave up a career. I'm just commonplace, and I maintain that I chose rightly. I chose to have the world woo me with type-written love letters in words of one syllable instead of flaming hieroglyphics, that's all. . . . Perhaps it all lies in the intrinsic difference between the sexes. You men must have hazard, and enterprise, and achievement, and despair. While women at their wisest, to maintain a just balance, are the conservatives, the materialists, the ones who conform to codes. No man at the hour of his greatest achievement has known the content I know when first I got my job, settled into a niche—settled for life. A level head: an easy berth. That's what life means to me, Lang."

Very gently she laid a hand on his shoulder and immediately withdrew it.

"This is my last trip up the beanstalk, and I'm going to bring the harp down to the ground. That's why I'm sitting here talking my head off, for all the music in the air, dear."

A nod of finality stopped an impetuous arm about her. It had all struck him as lamentably garbled reasoning, to be laughed at, repudiated, swept away in a first tribute to the full red lips so alien in their alluringness to the words which had issued from them. But she had folded her hands, even as she had folded them on the night they first met, and with the same effect of world-weariness, and satiety, and a very genuine sorrow. And she had thrown off the slippers, holding her feet toward the flames, while she mused.

The dimpled ankles gave her the childlike aspect he had first glimpsed, when staring at him she had blinked as before a dazzling vision. Here was a woman at once cloyed with existence, and terribly eager for all it might hold. A wave of discomfiture passed over him. . . . It lifted when, as if against her will, her clasped hands

fell apart and fluttered toward him.

When, cold and trembling, they met his, in a flash her whole attitude changed. The lips quivered and parted. Slowly the eyelids fell. And he saw, despite the earnestness of her discourse, despite that nod of finality, despite an ingrained disillusionment, despite convictions instilled by sheer force of will, resolutely adhered to, justified hitherto by material benefits commensurate to the renunciations entailed, despite all this, and without so much as a plea on his part other than a sulky drawing away, the woman yielding to a force before which her curious standards became as nothing.

It was very still. Even the fire burned steadily without a crackling, while the courtly old gentleman over the mantel, as if neither approving nor disapproving, blandly surveyed the two who stared at one another, both young, both eager for existence now, a sparkle in the man's eyes, in the woman's the gleam of tears.

At last she leaned a little toward him. For the barest instant her cheek grazed his. Then slowly her head dropped to his shoulder, and her fingers interlaced with his. He could hear her breathing like so many faint sobs. And as he caught her to him, words rose to his lips in an unintelligible mumble, high-flown, puerile entreaties, wild declarations, senseless, but for these two forcible enough to render meaningless the condemnation of a stupid world—inarticulate and barely audible, but for these two loud enough and distinct enough to drown all protest, all censure, all invective. . . .

CHAPTER V

And yet within a moment the extravagant outburst died in a feeble gulp. Within a moment peremptorily the proprieties silenced him. Within a moment from somewhere in the house there arose a horrible sound, strident, raucous, muffled by the walls—a sound like the stifled gasp of outraged decorum.

"Oswald has the croup!"

The muscles in her hands and arms tightened. Her eyes darted to the door separating the rooms, and roved from side to side in sudden alarm when she realized that the missing knob prevented her leaving except through the hall.

"Everybody wakes up—and they come for me—when he has an attack—"

Five seconds after the sound had disturbed them, she stood rigid, her face livid, her mouth twisted into an ugly grimace, her eyes still darting about the room in search for some means of escape. The sonorous, convulsive gasps continued, intermingled now with the sound of voices and footsteps. As if staking her all on a possible stroke of luck, she flew noiselessly across the room, threw open the door—

At the same instant the door to the left of his opened, and Miss Briggs stalked across the threshold.

The maidenly ankles were decently covered by felt juliets. A flannel wrapper was buttoned high to the maidenly chin. Six inches of braided hair hung from her head. Mechanically she stirred a dark mixture in a bowl, while her eyes narrowed as they travelled from the barefoot woman with loosened hair to the man in the chair before the fire. She seemed utterly disconcerted, ready for an explanation, unable at once to condemn the beautiful Miss Channing, who had been so unquestionably one of the Cadigan flock.

"Flaxseed and licorice," she announced primly, with the effect of granting a reprieve. "And rock candy, all melted down and the slightest dash of spirits. I keep it always on hand. It eases the little man. It—"

The clock furnished the last damning bit of evidence when it struck three. The spinster's jaws met in a condemnatory click. Scornfully she turned away and stalked down the stairs.

Rigid, motionless, Edith Channing continued to stand in the doorway.

After a full minute, Moore crossed the room and led her back to the fireplace. She was in a daze. The arm he held hung limp. Her step was the shuffle of an automaton. Far more than disdain, he felt a deep pity that she should be affected to such a degree by nothing more than her impending excommunication from a group of miserably insignificant moral precisians.

"I'll be asked to leave." The contralto was a mere lifeless whimper. "I'll be asked to leave. I'll be asked to leave."

Again and again until they maddened him, she repeated the words, nodding her head slowly, wringing her hands, smiling the vague, foolish smile of a being temporarily deranged by an overwhelming catastrophe.

It was a long time before she appeared conscious of his presence and of the gasps and footsteps in the room below. At last, by indistinguishable degrees, her face changed. It remained livid, but the twisted mouth settled into a straight line. She passed her hand across her forehead, aroused herself, gradually became an astute woman at bay, brought to a sorry pass, and ready to call upon extreme defense in order to vindicate herself.

But the inertness left her body. Coldly she regarded him, and he saw a cunning look in her eyes. He saw a woman not quite beaten, thinking rapidly, and ready unscrupulously to employ the full resources of deftly conceived strategics against a threatened downfall.

"We'll get away with it somehow, Lang," she whispered. "We'll put one over on those prudes—somehow—let me think—"

When a half-hearted smile told him that she had arrived at a more or less auspicious conclusion, at once it was followed by a look of sadness and sympathy that seemed to ask his pardon for an injury she was forced in this extremity to inflict against her will.

"Youngster," she announced dejectedly, "you must be gallant and propose marriage. It seems the only way."

There was so much pain revealed to him by her wry smile that without questioning all the solution entailed, he took her in his arms, forced a ring of gladness into his voice.

"Edith, you don't know how happy. . . . Will you—"

"I most certainly will, Lang."

Brusquely she released herself and continued in a hurried undertone:

"Now let me tell you what must be done. You're to do a sketch of me in this blue and green thing, barefoot and with my hair down. It must be finished by morning—one of your quick impressions, hack work, trade goods. Casually we'll announce our engagement. Casually we'll let it be known that the daily grind gave us only the midnight hours for the completion of this masterpiece which, after it's done duty as a magazine cover, will grace Mrs. Cadigan's drawing room—a souvenir of happy days, and so on, and so on. Oh, trust me, we'll get away with it somehow—gush, sentimentalize, give them the grand manner if they're dubious. Grand manner them, outraged virtue them till they quail. We'll put it over, but oh, Lang—" her voice quivered, broke— "I'm so sorry and ashamed. I wonder if you'll ever forgive me. I didn't want to come down to earth this way. It's so unfair to you, dear."

Now that the crimson tints were returning to her cheeks, and the rich timbre to her voice, the prospect of possession alone banished all misgivings. Again he swept her into his arms, and for the first time without resisting she clung to him. Eager entirely to dispel the unhappy look that still lurked in her great eyes, he tried to soothe her; began to speak without forethought the first words that came into his mind.

"It's coming out splendidly, Edith. A stroke of fate has adjusted everything. We'll be happy. I'll do my damndest to make you happy, dear. You're all worn out and upwrought.

You need a rest. To-morrow I'll telegraph Uncle Johnnie, and the two of us will leave this fool house, and go up to him for a while. You'll like it there. You'll like my uncle; and he'll like you awfully—"

"He'll like me awfully, eh?"

She spoke so sharply, freed herself so abruptly from his encircling arms that he was confounded. Matters had been progressing at a pace rapid enough to put him mentally out of breath. And he could not at once grasp the import of the sudden alertness with which she wheeled, once more to scrutinize John Langham's portrait. But dimly he realized an imperative need of reverting her attention to him; laid a hand on her arm, which she shook off, ventured an uneasy "Edith, dear," which she seemed not to hear. Deep in reflection she stared on at the portrait, as if oblivious to everything save the dawn of a new idea, the first hazy inklings of another and more satisfactory way out of the predicament.

Her engrossment provoked him almost to anger. It occurred to him that these two, the old man and the radiant young woman, were arriving at a secret understanding from which he was to be excluded. For the first time he felt a premonition of trouble at the unexpected turn of events. Whether it was because what linked the woman to his uncle in his thoughts of her was a remoteness which made her all the more captivating because unattainable, or because both impressed him as beings who had put behind them the hankering for hazard, the search for the *imprévu*,—beings, therefore, steeped in a chill, drab wisdom, all at once he realized that Edith Channing had stirred him far more when she seemed out of reach than when she had lain passive in his arms.

Now that the emotional surge was on its wane, the idea of life companionship lost much of its attraction. And, too, now that a vista of entrancing uncertainties had dwindled to a dull prospect of wedlock, he saw that the marriage of convenience she had planned

was far less treasonable to her rich loveliness than the career of a foot-stool spouse which he knew she would embrace in impulsive atonement for having dragged him into the fold of the lawfully mated. The situation was becoming even more involved. And yet, even as with every second his perplexity increased, over the woman's face an unexpected serenity was slowly establishing itself. Her shoulders straightened. She was holding her head high.

"My feet are planted on solid earth, Lang!" The glad ring in her voice astounded him. "To-morrow you'll telegraph your Uncle Johnnie, will you? To-morrow you'll take your affianced to meet your Uncle Johnnie, will you? I wonder if he's as safe in his retreat as he imagines himself. He'll like me awfully, will he? Believe me, I'm determined that he'll like me awfully; I'm terribly determined! A vast estate, a fine old name, prestige, wealth—and that face! Lang, I've climbed down from the beanstalk." The contralto resounded jubilantly. "For up there in the hills I'm going to jilt you, dear!"

She stepped from his side, paused to whisper a hurried, "Thanks for a lovely interlude," then walked across the room, and back to the fireplace. He recognized the firm tread, the perfect poise, the magnificent assurance of the Edith Channing he had known before a transitory surrender to an ineluctable spell had brought the gentle uncertainty to her manner. He could hear an excited whispering in the hall, and the very fact that it disturbed her not in the least intimated how completely she had regained her equilibrium. Her arms folded triumphantly, her head thrown back, all smiles she addressed the portrait:

"Uncle Johnnie, I'm matrimonially inclined!"

Of a sudden, Moore became prey to an onrushing loneliness. These two who were dear to him seemed already to have arrived at the secret understanding wherein he was no factor. It dawned upon him that this woman was supremely capable of storming even the buttresses of a nirvana, that while her ends and his kinsman's were virtually the same, hers, the methods of aggression, gave her overwhelming odds over a system of discreet retreat that had landed John Langham in hermitdom.

Moreover, were there not perhaps vestiges of an erstwhile *homme de monde* in the sixty-year-old who never approved or disapproved, vestiges which might render him not altogether immune to a loveliness at once regal and barbaric, to a voice like the peal of a bell, and especially to the large, strong hands with their blunted fingertips,—the hands that could span an octave and three keys.

"Uncle Johnnie, I've designs on you!"

After all, he wondered, was there any solution more feasible than this which conduced to despondency even as subtly it assuaged? The bruise of unfulfillment rankled, but already the boy sensed an approaching contentment. His curiosity was satisfied. The woman no longer baffled. There was no longer the maddening suspense, no longer an issue hanging in the air. And when finally she who called herself Edith Channing turned to him with outstretched arms, he felt before her, as before the beautifully bungled creation of some arch joker and artist, a certain awe.

"Kiss your auntie, youngster," she was murmuring. "Kiss the—the imminent Mrs. Langham, nevvv mine."

(The End)



The Distressing Predicament of an Honourable Little Boy

By Ian MacKinnon

I CAME upon a little boy seated by the roadside and weeping bitterly.

And being moved with compassion, I halted, and thus addressed this piteous urchin: "Little boy, wherefore weepest thou, making thy little nose so moist and untidy?"

And, behold, he gave answer: "I am weeping because I do not believe in God."

And I spake in tones of soothing: "Little boy, do not cry. Neither make moan so bitterly. For lo! There are millions of us anthropoids with the belief which you find it impossible to embrace, and where do we get off? What does it get us? Does it get us the bluebird? Nay. It gets us Maeterlinck. Does it get us the elixir of life? Nay. It gets us Oliver Lodge and Cozened

Doyle. Does it get us loving leaders? Nay. It gets us the Rev. Dr. Wilhelm Sunday, the Anti-Saloon League, and Sabbath School superintendents who mulct us for testaments to take the joy from the lives of inoffensive heathen niggers and Chinese. So do not cry, little boy."

"You fail to grasp," replied the little boy, "the reason why I weep and make my moan. I am an honourable little boy, and feel bound to state my real convictions upon all vital subjects. And my father is the rector of St. Swithin's. And when I state to him my real conviction in this matter he will beat hell out of me."

And he continued to weep and lament marvellous loud.



LOVE is the emotion that a young girl feels when she discovers that the man who has stared at her has five automobiles and likes to go to Palm Beach.



IF you wish to incur a girl's enmity, tell her that she lacks charm; or, if you prefer another way, tell her that her sweetheart lacks brains.



The Tradition of the House of Monsieur

By Maurice Davis

I

T O-NIGHT Monsieur was going out and he was careful, standing before his mirror slickly to brush back the hair he was pleased to imagine made him reminiscent of Liszt, Handel, Mozart—even Massenet.

Monsieur was a fairly round little man with a crimson face much more spheroidal than the modest paunch which drooped a little in what appeared to be an effort to meet his short legs.

A curiously unique face it was, having, in lieu of cheek-bones, two rosy knobs that crowded the eyes somewhat, with a tendency to transform what would have been almond-shaped eyes into meagre Oriental slits. And from between these slits, which showed very little of white, dark-blue twinkled—one was never sure with just what feeling. His eye-brows, iron gray, were spare but of uncommon length and curled about as they left the apex of his nose and started for his ears, as if they had been undecided whether to go on or not, and had finally settled on the former course. His nose was short and suggestive of a Celtic ancestor, but this incongruity was balanced by his hair, which bespoke the old days and aristocracy of France. Brushed back as it was, it recalled in him nothing of the fanatic. A moustache of a pepper-and-salt mixture which trailed cautiously round the edges of his mouth and merged itself in a straggling Vandyke was not the least of the curious assemblage of features

which made up Monsieur's curious face.

Monsieur, when seen in the public street, inevitably wore a black slouch hat. There was nothing singular about this hat, but if one were imaginative it would require no straining to envisage the ill-omened feather of earlier periods stuck high in it. This illusion was enhanced by the coat, a long, black cloak-like garment, the collar, in any weather, customarily turned up.

Monsieur finished his *toilette*. Before instructing Nancy, the lady of a thousand tasks, what to say if the telephone should ring or anybody should call at the brownstone house, he reread a letter that had come in the last mail. It said:

"Although you don't know me, I've heard about you from Louis. I'm living here for the moment at 4— E. 44th St. I got out of the Institution yesterday and boarded a train for the city right off. Do you know where Louis is? I want to write. Please tell me, won't you?"

May Gardner."

II

His closed cab drew up to a red-brick house and stopped. He thought it was a tenement until he saw the peculiar turrets and white-framed windows, which stamped it as a once pretentious boarding-house now on the decline. Telling the driver to wait, Monsieur mounted the few steps and entered the hall. The smell, once his ring was answered, con-

vinced Monsieur that the place still had some pretensions to respectability, as a boarder would have to be decently respectable to tolerate it.

A woman quite as round as Monsieur and quite as ruddy directed him up two flights of much-worn carpet to a room at the rear of the house, where he paused at a door and knocked.

"Come in, M'sheer," called a girlish voice.

Slightly surprised, Monsieur entered a moderately large room. He was careful to close the door behind him. He had a strong premonition of what was going to be said, and he was afraid outsiders might be entertained by it. One of the first things to strike his eye was an old-fashioned speaking tube, through which the landlady had doubtless heralded his presence.

Then he turned to face his hostess squarely.

Whatever Monsieur had composed his mind to see—in whatever human guise he had pictured the writer of the strange note—he was surely not prepared for the fragile little creature who came forward and unceremoniously relieved him of his hat.

"Have any trouble finding me?" she asked, he thought, surely, with a glimmer of a smile.

He mumbled something, busy in the double effort to collect himself and partly comprehend anything at all of what now appeared to be an impossible situation. What a petite creature! Fragile as a piece of Sèvres—and as rare. Her age he guessed to be sixteen. Under his breath he addressed the image of Louis rather freely.

"What do you say?"

Monsieur was on the point of taking the chair she indicated, and he paused. She had sunk down opposite.

"I said—the comfort is here. You—wanted to see me?" It was his wish to learn the worst at once.

"Have you heard anything from—Louis?" she asked.

He observed that her manner was neither as frank nor as easy as she

would have had him believe from the carelessness of her tone.

"*Oui*—yes, I have sent to Cambridge the telegram. He is at the Harvard what you call a fres—*a*—"

"A freshman?"

"*Oui*, freshman. I expect to have him home soon—tomorrow."

He waited anxiously, but all she said, following a pause, was:

"I'm so glad."

On the heels of another pause, he asked tentatively:

"Then you did not have to see me about anything—more?"

The childish blue eyes, which had attracted him earlier, looked up with an even braver attempt at frankness. It was a youthful gaze made wise before its time, to which phenomenon the worldly scrutiny of Monsieur was not insensible.

"No. That was all. It was good of you to come, and—"

III

MONSIEUR did not sleep well that night. Before leaving the girl he had delicately wound his way into the question of her age, and was surprised to hear her say eighteen. Well, everything considered . . . still . . .

He had, to be sure, asked questions which she either evaded or invented answers for. He soon saw that whatever had transpired between her and Louis was sacred to her. A wonderful little woman! He doubted if it would be safe to criticise even Louis' scarves so that she might hear. Apparently, merely the news that Louis was coming back was enough to silence her and—*What an embroglio?* What was one to do?

The sandman answered Monsieur with a sprinkle of sleep that, while light, kept him in bed until nine the next morning, when a persistent noise through the house brought him up blinking to a sitting position. A door or two banged; there were springy footsteps on the stairs and a sudden gust of wind preceded the presence of the young Monsieur.

Dark as any scion of the goddess Pyx, with a countenance clear and good-looking, and interesting beyond its interesting reflection of the most reckless of wild impulses, the young Monsieur stood before his father.

"What's up, Pop?" he grinned, carefully aiming his cap at a distant chair and lodging it precisely in the cushioned seat.

"*Vous êtes,*" returned the old man, dryly.

At this the young Monsieur burst into quick impatience, the grin being swamped in a cloudy frown.

"Good Lord, Pop, can that Frog!"

"*C'est moi,*" said the old man with more mildness, as if he required explaining. "Had you lived more in France—"

"Well, I didn't. I was born here. What if my parents *were* traveling at the time, and later carted me back to Paris? That doesn't make *me* a Frog. I was born here and I'm glad of it. I got your telegram."

"Well?"

"Well, I thought you were—well, sick. That's why I rushed down this way. How do you feel? Now don't answer in Frog!"

"I feel *b*—good. And now I get up—so. Now, if you will *allez en bas*—"

"Do you do it to aggravate me—or what? Gee whiz, Pop, you'll *never* learn—will you?"

"Ask Nancy," the old man went on, heedless of the interruption, "to have breakfast—soon."

Slowly, thoughtfully, Monsieur made his toilette and dressed for breakfast, his mind intent on the modern young man he claimed as a son. Sometimes Monsieur was very near the gods, if a great heart full of love will conjure the propinquity, and at such times his pride and affection acted as a double buffer to stabs. Louis, like the ancient kings, could do no wrong; like the kings, certainly a bit rascally—playfully so, perhaps—but never to the point where his gallantry or chivalry would suffer.

Had one suggested the possibility of

the young Monsieur's being spoilt, one would have found himself involved in a discussion of the boy's superb ancestry. Blood, Monsieur would tell the indelicate person, blood, rich in quality and rare of its kind—*eh, bien!*—and in the growing years what could one expect?

The young Monsieur, however, pretended to despise, or really did despise, the very traditions and ancestry that gave him his kingly exemption. The preparatory school, where Frenchmen were almost unanimously accepted as eating frogs whole, probably had had much to do with the young Monsieur's curious distaste for the language, literature and customs of the race. One thing was certain. From the time he was sixteen, the young Monsieur had not tolerated the French language spoken in the house, and was the power behind the throne in the sudden dismissal of the French maid whom Nancy, a Celt, had succeeded.

Monsieur was thinking of these things—or many of them—as he sat down opposite Louis at the breakfast table.

Gingerly he tapped his egg on the transparent edge of the china receptacle and slowly looked up. He pretended to sigh—or it may have been that he did sigh.

"Ah, how nice now, if I had a daughter to strike my egg in the morning," he suggested.

Louis' eyes shot up with quick curiosity.

"What in—gee whiz, Pop, what's getting into you lately? First you get a bug about going to France for a while and having me going to a Frog school, and now—*now* you want a daughter! Widowers, in *this* country, don't have daughters."

And Louis fell back to his breakfast.

"A daughter-in-the-law. What?"

"Well, that's regular enough."

"I have mine."

"Your what?"

"The one I have in my mind."

"I'll bet it's a Frog you've got in your mind."

"No, it is no F-frog. You know her."

"Eh?" Louis looked up with genuine interest. "Who is she?"

"*Mademoi*—Mees Gardner."

The young Monsieur dropped his fork and stared, making no effort to conceal his surprise.

"Where in thunder did *she* drop from?"

"The Institution."

"What Institution?"

"Wherever she was. I did not ask her. I—I did not want to know."

Louis looked relieved.

"That was right. It's none of anybody's business."

"Her age is—do you know?"

"Oh, about my age—a little younger perhaps."

"When did you meet her?"

"Last year. She and the Prep were in the same town."

"Is she a—a good girl?"

The young man reddened perceptibly.

"Good Lord! I really don't know. How could I know? Do you think I spend my time investigating the reputation of every girl I pal around with?"

There was a pause. The young Monsieur broke it.

"I guess, since everything is all right, I'll beat it back to Cambridge this afternoon."

Monsieur shook his head.

"No—not this afternoon. Maybe tomorrow. I have business today, but tonight we will talk. *Bien, eh?*"

IV

THE library of Monsieur was a shadowy, cozy room, with a modest reading lamp, two tables, a few engravings and nothing like neutrality in the selection of the books it contained. The volumes were neither well assorted nor well arranged. Some were shelved awry, some stiff-laced. Rousseau, for instance, winked at Villon, who winked back. De Musset had a perky air, while Beaumarchais gazed on complacently. Dumas and Balzac appeared to feel out of place, especially the former,

who reminded one of a well-fed kitten near the warmth. Hugo glared down on everybody from his pinnacle on the highest shelf, which probably accounted for Voltaire's lip, which curled on the sub-adjacent shelf.

It was here that, after they had drunk their wine and the young Monsieur to please his father had lighted a cigar, that Monsieur opened up a new confidence about himself.

There was an old family tradition in the noble house of Monsieur which said that inter-family lying was unknown to the house. Many a Monsieur had lied like a gentleman to other houses when occasion demanded, but when a Monsieur was questioned by a *Monsieur* tradition said that the truth prevailed. The young Monsieur had known this, but he had never heard what the old man now told him.

"You must know, Louis, that in France we were rich, but not rich in the way Americans are. Did you ever hear how I made my fortune? No, you could not know. I gambled for it."

"You *what?*"

"I gambled—I, a rich man. For five nights—you shall see the newspaper clippings—I gambled in a famous house in Paris. I did not lose on any one of those five nights. Without your dear mother I did not want Paris. I did not want France. I courted America. A new land, which would help me to—to keep myself—to—"

"I understand."

"And so—I got—got what I wanted to have."

The old man gazed off reflectively.

The young Monsieur appeared to be interested in the ticking of the bronze clock over the fireplace. At last he turned slightly.

"Is that why you wear those clothes? Is that the way a Parisian gambler gets himself up?"

"Not all the time," Monsieur answered.

Then he stirred, as if he suddenly remembered what he had intended to say from the beginning.

"You have never lied to me, Louis."

"No, I haven't," the young Monsieur admitted.

"Why?"

"I don't know," Louis shrugged.

"But I can tell you why. It is in the blood. Our family has not lied to members of the family. There is no history of a lie. To others—yes; to ourselves—no!"

"Well? You don't suppose you've caught me in a lie?"

"No, no, Louis. I was just thinking about that little *mademoi*—girl."

The light left Louis' face the way sunbeams leave the dark, suspicion and puzzlement clouding his eyes.

"Well?"

"There is no doubt in my mind that not much of good might come from such friendship as you gave in this case."

"See here, Pop, *you* understand that. I don't like to put it in words and—What *am* I talking about! Any man, and *you* certainly, know the world, knows that these things happen, and—"

"Yes. We understand. But sometimes we all do not understand how to help. How could we explain this to *votre mère*? Your dear mother was always trying to make us men over. '*Tout homme a une passion dominante*,' I used to say to her. 'Then let it,' she would say softly, 'be for good.' And so I have been thinking of her ever since—this girl—"

"What did she tell you?" The young Monsieur was concerned with the present.

"*Ne . . . rien*—nothing."

"I thought maybe she gave you a story—you know—and got you excited over her side of it."

If Monsieur was convinced that Louis never would lie to him, the young Monsieur was as sure as he was of his cigarettes that Monsieur would not be the one to break the ridiculous tradition.

"No. If she had done that I would hesitate. She was so good, so brave."

Louis shook his head impatiently.

"But you can't help—that's all there is to it."

For answer, as if he had waited for

this ultimatum to decide a course of action already planned, Monsieur arose and opened a drawer under the table. From this he selected a deck of cards and motioned his curious son to the table.

"I want her for a daughter, *mon fils*. Once, as I told you, when I wanted money—much money—I played all to have what I wanted. I and *mon fils* cannot live as we have been doing with the knowledge of this girl between us. So, *mon enfant*, one of us is going to marry her."

"Are you *insane*?" The young Monsieur was utterly incredulous. A second look at his father, however, convinced him that Monsieur was not only sane but determined. At the realization the colour left his face and he trembled a little. This was unheard of, preposterous! And yet—the family, as he knew from tradition, had done strange things during the life of its uncrowned dynasty.

"Well? Would you have me marry *l'enfant*?"

"You? *You!* Good God! No!"

"Why not?"

"It's absurd—and you know it!"

"Her position—maybe it is absurd?"

"Yours would be worse. You'd make it worse. I—I just couldn't stand it."

"Ah, you could not bear the—the memories?"

The young Monsieur groaned *audibly*.

"That's not the worst."

Monsieur hesitated.

The white-faced boy before him was more visibly distressed than he could remember ever having seen him. It hurt. With his expressive dark eyes and fair, pale skin he was his mother in her youth standing before Monsieur.

He shook himself, as if by the action he dissolved a jarring fantasy, and essayed to say:

"There was a—"

He could not do it. He saw as he spoke the line of ancestors stretching back in the past to remote ages, the look upon their stern, gay and handsome faces, which, however, cast in Nature's mould, wanted not of a characterizing

nobility, and it caused him the nearest sensation he had ever experienced to a faltering wince. With a supreme effort he faced the breaking of the tradition.

"There was *une enfant*," he concluded simply.

The young Monsieur accepted this in silence, although it was noticeable that he stiffened a little.

"I never knew. You believe me—say you believe!"

"No doubt. You were careful not to leave her a writing address."

"I—I was afraid . . ." Slowly the young Monsieur clenched his white-knuckled, slender hands, and as slowly unclenched them. "Did you see—the child?"

Monsieur shook his head.

On the polished surface of the table the cards lay where they had been dropped. For several moments young Monsieur stared meaninglessly at the slightly disheveled deck. The preposterous gamble would not be made now. No need for that. He knew what he had to do, and he set himself to do it in a manner that must have set his line of ancestors to nodding at one another like palm fronds in a breeze.

"Have you the address?"

Without a word Monsieur reached into an inner pocket and produced the envelope he had received the day before. The letter had been carefully taken out. The young Monsieur accepted it, studied it a few moments, and hesitantly started to go. At the door he changed his mind and returned.

"Forgive me, Dad!"

"No, no, *mon fils*, forgive me!"

V

MIDNIGHT came, but young Monsieur did not. As a consequence of his anxious waiting Monsieur grew tired, and undressed for bed. Here his anxiety

was not lessened, since he became engrossed in prosecuting a strange ethical proceeding against himself, in which he called Duty as a witness against the ignominy with which he was charged for the breaking of a superb tradition.

History is replete with the wild, quixotic deeds Frenchmen have performed for the aid or comfort of the feminine heart, but he wondered if a gentleman of France had ever gone this far before. To lay down one's life—meagre, stupid in its consequences as compared to offending a far-reaching line of kingly nobles, who, though dead, had been kept fresh in the family memory by the very flame he had that night extinguished. It would never burn again—it could never burn again. Some far distant day, when he was long dead and gone to increase the superb line, a descendant would hark back into a far chamber of memory and tell to a still younger Monsieur how the family of Monsieur—until a fatal evening—had religiously held aloof from inter-family lying.

Suddenly Monsieur checked these reflections and half sat up. The room was dark and his sight was none too good, but he thought he had heard a step. He had indeed. It was in the room.

"*Où es-tu, mon cher père?*" asked a greatly altered voice.

"Here, *mon enfant*."

"Everything is all right, Dad. She is coming tomorrow. I thought I'd tell you, before going to bed, that the baby died. Good night, *mon père*."

It had been almost impossible for him to reach a semi-drowsy state before, but now, however, for a man who had only a few hours before worried a whole line of ancestors by the breaking of a precious tradition, Monsieur slept well.



Répétition Générale

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

§ 1

BAD WORKWOMANSHIP. — The essential incompetence of women, their congenital incapacity for small expertness, is never more dramatically shown than in their manhandling of the primary business of their sex. If the average woman were as competent at her trade of getting a husband as the average car conductor is at his trade of robbing the fare box, then a bachelor beyond the age of twenty-five would be so rare in the world that yokels would pay ten cents to gape at him.

But women, in this fundamental industry, pursue a faulty technique and permit themselves to be led astray by unsound principles. The axioms into which they have precipitated their wisdom are nearly all untrue. For example, the axiom that the way to capture a man is through his stomach—which is to say, by feeding him lavishly. Nothing could be more absurd. The average man has such rudimentary tastes in victualry that he doesn't know good food from bad. He will eat anything set before him by a cook that he likes. The true way to fetch him is with drinks. A single bottle of drinkable wine will fill more men with the passion of love than ten sides of beef or a ton of potatoes. Even a *seidel* of beer, deftly applied, is enough to mellow even the hardest bachelor. If women really knew their business, they would have abandoned cooking centuries ago, and devoted themselves to brewing, distilling and bartending. It is a rare man who will walk five blocks

for a first-rate meal. But it is equally a rare man who, in the old days of freedom, would *not* walk five blocks for a first-rate cocktail.

Another idiotic feminine axiom is the one to the effect that the way to capture a man is to be distant—to throw all the burden of courtship upon him. This is precisely the way to lose him. A man face to face with a girl who seems reserved and unapproachable is not inspired thereby to drag her off in the manner of a caveman; on the contrary, he is inspired to thank God that here, at last, is a girl with whom it is possible to have friendly converse without getting into trouble—that here is one not likely to grow mushy and make a mess.

The average man does not marry because some marble fair one challenges his enterprise. He marries because he has evidence before him that some sweet creature has fallen in love with him. In brief, it is chivalry that undoes him. The girl who infallibly gets a husband—in fact, *any* husband that she wants—is the one who tracks him boldly, fastens him with sad eyes, and then, when his conscience has begun to torture him, throws her arms around his neck, bursts into maidenly tears on his shoulder, and tells him that she fears her forwardness will destroy his respect for her. It is only a colossus who can resist such strategy. But it takes only a man of the intellectual grade of a Y. M. C. A. secretary to elude the girl who is afraid to take the offensive.

A third bogus axiom I lately desiccated upon in this place, to wit, the

axiom that a man is repelled by palpable cosmetics—that the wise girl is the one who effectively conceals her sophistication of her complexion. What could be more unsound? The truth is that very few men are competent to distinguish between a layer of talc and the authentic epidermis, and that the few who have the gift are quite free from any notion that the latter is superior to the former. What a man seeks, when he enters the society of women, is something pleasing to the eye. That is all he asks. He does not waste any time upon a chemical or spectroscopic examination of the object observed; he simply determines whether it is beautiful or not beautiful. Has it so long escaped women that their husbands, when led astray, are usually led astray by women so vastly besmeared with cosmetics that they resemble barber-poles more than human beings? Are they yet blind to the superior pull of a French maid, a chorus girl, a stenographer begauded like a painter's palette? And still they go on rubbing off their varnish, brushing the lamp-black from their eye-lashes, seeking eternally the lip-stick that is so depressingly purple that it will deceive! Alas, what folly!

§ 2

Sic Semper Mysticus.—The latest "mystic" to blow up and bust is the Rev. Dr. Maurice Maeterlinck. For twenty years, by the crafty hocus-pocus of living in a remote ruined castle, consorting with the birds, the bees and the butterflies, sending out photographs of a sad-eyed, ascetic and beatified patriarch, and writing pieces about the After Life and the Stars upon birch bark, the Rev. Dr. contrived to have himself viewed by the thitherward yokelry as a saintish and eerie creature. For twenty years. But mysticism is a hard job, and it grows tiresome. So one day the Rev. Dr. decided to take a little time off among the mortals.

Heathen America would be the scene

of his visitation. Presently he came, in the wake of a great white dazzling celestial light, and the lowly peoples be-thought them that it was but meet they bend the knee in awe, in veneration and in self-abasement. But before bending the knee for good, the lowly jakes thought that for once they'd take a look at one of their beloved mystics. They took it. And what they beheld was a vain old gent in a red tie and pearl-gray spats with a French cutie on his arm. And then they took another look. And what they beheld further was the old gent one night clapping his hands for Ethel Barrymore in the Empire Theater and the next keeping time with his foot to the tunes of a musical comedy at the New Amsterdam. And they took then still other looks. And now they beheld the old gent passing the sassafras with Mary Garden in the green-room of the Lexington Avenue Opera House, and fighting with the manager of a lecture bureau for a bigger percentage of his box-office haul, and stealing a look at the comely chickens on Fifth Avenue, and signing a contract with Sam Goldfish to write scenarios out in Los Angeles for the movies, and gazing up in rapt wonder at the Singer Building, and sticking three slabs of butter into the gizzard of a single baked potato. And, behold-ing, the jakes said "Oh Hell, Ambrose" . . . and turned their devo-tions to Sir Oliver Lodge.

§ 3

The Confederate Mind.—The work-ings of the sub-Potomac intelligence deserve a great deal more attention from psychologists than they have ever got; the Freudians, in particular, might cast an eye that way with profit. There is, down in that lush and lazy region, a special type of mind, showing all the more grotesque characters of the general mob mind, but with certain peculiar infirmities of its own. It is, on the one hand, infinitely naïve and credulous, and on the other hand, infinitely truculent and sensitive. The best

Southern thought is seldom above the average of, say, Allentown, Pa., Union Hill, N. J., or Dubuque, Iowa. It runs in narrow grooves—narrow and shallow. For fifty years not a single original idea worth hearing has come out of the whole Confederacy. Even the eternal race question, with the entire intellect of the region concentrated upon it, has not brought forth a notion showing any sense. Worse, the Southerner bitterly resents the intrusion of ideas from without. Carry an idea to him, particularly one related to his own problems, and he will fly into a rage. As a result, hawkers of ideas seldom, if ever, cross the Potomac; trade is too poor and too dangerous. As a secondary result, the highest institutions of learning in the South are still in the Baptist seminary stage of development, most of the leading newspapers are parochial and ignorant, and it is the unanimous opinion of the best native intellects that Henry Timrod was a greater poet than Walt Whitman, that Stonewall Jackson was a greater strategist than either Bonaparte or Moltke, and that the fallacies of the scoundrel Darwin were all disposed of thirty years ago by Bishop Balderdash, of the M. E. Church South. . . .

Not long ago, indulging myself in this place in a brief speculation upon the subject of lynching, I ventured the view that one of the chief causes of the frequent massacre of Moors in the South was a lack of other recreations. Defending the Southerner against the common charge of special viciousness, I argued that he was merely a simple-minded man out for a good show, and that the substitution of good shows of other varieties would slacken his lamentable thirst for burning coons. Among such good shows, all common in the North, I cited those provided by brass bands, symphony orchestras, boxing matches, amateur athletic contests, shoot-the-chutes, roof gardens, horse races, yellow journals and automatic pianos. . . . Well, what was the response of the South to this well-meant and surely not insane suggestion? In

brief, that response was a storm of ob-jurgation. I was answered as if I had proposed something infamous. One paper, at the end of half a column of unrelieved abuse, damned me to the Wesleyan hell as a man of "wineshop temperament, brass-jewelry tastes and pornographic predilections." . . . In brief, brass bands, in the South, are classed with brass jewelry, and both are snares of the devil! To advocate setting up symphony orchestras is pornography! . . .

Is the job really for psychologists? I begin to suspect that it may be for psychiatrists.

§ 4

On an Actress' Charm.—An actress is charming on the stage in the degree that her audience imagines she is charming off the stage.

§ 5

On Illusions.—The notion that as man grows older his illusions leave him is not quite true. What is true is that his early illusions are supplanted by new and, to him, equally convincing illusions. The man of forty-five has just as many illusions as the boy of eighteen, but they are different illusions. The man of ninety, dying, carries with him to the grave, if not the boyhood illusion of one woman's love, the senescent illusion of all women's faithlessness, and if not the boyhood illusion of the goodness of Santa Claus, the senescent illusion of the goodness of God.

§ 6

Cupid and Well-Water.—In the department of love, I daresay, the first effect of Prohibition will be to raise up impediments to marriage. It was alcohol, in the past, that was the primary cause of perhaps a majority of alliances among civilized folk. The man, priming himself with cocktails to achieve boldness, found himself suddenly bogged in a boozy sort of sentimentality, and so yielded to the ancient

tricks of the lady. Absolutely sober, men will be harder to snare. Coffee will never mellow them sufficiently. Thus I look for a fall in the marriage rate.

But only temporarily. In the long run, Prohibition will make marriage more popular than it has ever been in the past, and for the plain reason that, once it is in full effect, the life of a civilized bachelor will become intolerable. In the past he went to his club. But a club without a bar is as hideously unattractive as a beautiful girl without teeth. No sane man will go into it. In two years, in fact, nine out of ten clubs will be closed. The only survivors will be a few bleak rookeries for senile widowers. The bachelor of lesser years, unable to put up with the horrors of such infernos, will inevitably decide that if he must keep sober he may just as well have a charming girl to ease his agonies, and so he will expose himself in society, and some fair one or other will nab him.

At the moment, observing only the first effect of Prohibition, the great majority of intelligent women are opposed to it. But when the secondary effect begins to appear they will become in favour of it. By that time they will have the vote everywhere. I see no hope.

§ 7

The Critical Root.—At the root of all criticism, there is always discoverable either envy or disgust. From the hands into which envy falls, there emanate the transparent and betraying "But in fairness to's," "In justice it should be admitted's," "However's," "But it would be hardly fair to's" and "But then's." From the hands into which disgust falls, there blooms the authentic critical flower. The worst of criticism is the bloom of envy; the best is the bloom of an irrepressible disgust.

§ 8

Da Capo.—The great masses of the plain people, it would appear, never get enough. Let one mountebank fool them

beyond bearing, and straightway they give their trade to another. Often, indeed, they go back to the very same booth. Do you remember all the highfalutin gabble, a year or so ago, about the benign hocus-pocuses of the Y. M. C. A.?—and how the soldiers, when they got back, were going to expose its deviltries without mercy, and warn the rest of the populace against it, and maybe ride some of its pussyfooted secretaries on poles? Well, the Y. M. C. A. is still in business at the old stand. Its secretaries still lecture on their great deeds in the war. Its lamasaries are still packed with Jews studying double-entry bookkeeping, electrical engineering, batik work and honest advertising, and with Christians shooting pool. It is still racking the yokelery with colossal "drives"—and getting the money.

§ 9

By Way of Comic Relief.—Répétition Générale's ticket in the November election:

For President: Woodrow Wilson.

§ 10

Addenda to "The American Credo."—

1. That when peroxide of hydrogen is applied to an open wound, the ensuing bubbling shows that the wound is being efficaciously disinfected.

2. That the invariable dessert in a third-rate boarding house is stewed prunes.

3. That the late J. Pierpont Morgan was the easiest mark the fake antique dealers of Europe had discovered in 250 years, and that a syndicate of Italians actually built five factories in Italy for the sole purpose of manufacturing fake Rembrandts to sell to him.

4. That the monocle worn by an Englishman is made of cheap window glass, and that whenever he wants to see anything he has to drop it out of his eye.

5. That no circus ever lives up to its posters.

6. That the life of a young man who

marries an old woman for her money is always a very miserable and unhappy one.

7. That England entered the war in order to discharge an obligation of honour to Belgium.

8. That Southerners are chivalrous.

9. That all college girls wear glasses and are very ugly.

10. That all men who want to work very little and get a lot of money for it are Bolsheviki.

11. That since the war all the French atheists have become devout Catholics.

12. That men who are good to animals are often wife-beaters.

13. That all criminals get caught sooner or later.

14. That in all the battles of the late war, both on the eastern front and on the western front, the German hordes enormously outnumbered the small and gallant bands of Russians, Frenchmen, Italians, Rumanians, Portuguese, Sikhs, Cambodians, Irishmen, Scotchmen, Welshmen, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, Somalis, Greeks, Singalese and Americans who opposed them.

15. That water drunk from the washstand faucet is not as pure as water drunk from the kitchen faucet.

16. That if a child eats snow he will get diphtheria.

17. That all professional strong men are muscle-bound.

18. That prize-fighters are very good to their mothers, and that they are drunk all the time they are not training for a match.

19. That a baby knows instinctively whether a man is good or bad.

20. That all Harvard men are rather effeminate and affect a decided English accent.

21. That although 200 per cent of Washington's army deserted at one time or another, the patriotism and valour of the Continentals should set us a great example.

22. That there are a lot of things which are very good in theory but won't work in practice.

23. That if all the money in the

world were to be divided, within a year the same men would have it again.

24. That the late Theodore Roosevelt got a dollar a word for all his magazine writings.

25. That the French make great soldiers; that the English Tommy is a great soldier; that the Canadians make great soldiers; that the Australians, Germans, Belgians and Americans make great soldiers; that the Cossacks are great soldiers; that the Japs make great little soldiers, etc., etc.

26. That the French, Dutch, Belgians, Jews, Scotch and Germans are very thrifty peoples; that the Italians save every cent they make; that the New England Yankee is very economical; that the Chinese and Japanese live on rice and are extraordinarily thrifty; that, in fact, no one is improvident and extravagant except Americans in New York and Paris, and all Irishmen.

27. That if all the coal in the world should suddenly give out, science would quickly devise something in its stead.

28. That it always takes a woman at least an hour and a half to dress, whereas a man finishes the job in three minutes.

§ 11

To Him That Hath.—Perhaps the most valuable of all human possessions, next to a superior and disdainful air, is the reputation of being well-to-do. Nothing else so neatly eases one's way through life. There is in ninety-nine per cent. of all men an irresistible impulse to crook the knee to wealth, to defer to the power that it carries with it, to see all sorts of superiorities in the man who has it, or is said to have it. True enough, envy goes with the craven neck, but it is envy somehow purged of all menace: the inferior man is afraid to do evil to the man with money; he is even afraid to *think* evil of him—that is, in any patent and offensive way. What stays his natural hatred of his superior, I daresay, is the sneaking hope that he may get some of the money by being polite—that it will pay him better to caress than to strike.

Whatever the psychological process, he always arrives at a great affability. Give out the news that one has just made a killing in the stock market, or robbed some confiding widow of her dower, or swindled the government in some patriotic enterprise, and at once one will discover that one's shabbiness is a charming eccentricity, and one's judgment of wines worth hearing, and one's politics worthy of attention and respect. The man who is thought to be poor never gets a fair chance. No one wants to listen to him. No one gives a damn what he thinks or knows or feels. No one has any active desire for his good opinion.

I discovered this principle early in life, and have put it to use ever since. I have got a great deal more out of men (and women) by having the name of being a well-heeled fellow than I have ever got by being decent to them, or by dazzling them with my sagacity, or by hard industry, or by a personal beauty that is singular and ineffable.

§ 12

On Happiness.—The greatest happiness is that of imminent, but not yet quite realized, achievement. To be about to succeed—that is true happiness. To have succeeded—that is to be in the Pschorr brewery, with diabetes.

§ 13

On Falling in Love.—What makes a man fall in love with a girl? A noble character? A tender disposition? An alert mind? Womanly sympathy? A fine integrity? Dependability? Gentleness, kindness, charitableness? The fact that she is a fit potential mother for his children? Perhaps, but I doubt it. I doubt that a man often falls in love with a girl for any of such more or less sound, accepted reasons. What generally gets him is something much less granted, something entirely superficial, something—when viewed after the years—that seems almost absurd. Looking back over the girls I have been

in love with, I recall that I fell in love, as the phrase goes, with one because I was fetched by the smooth quality of her speaking voice, with three others because they wore lace or linen baby collars, with one because she stole up behind me one night at a rather formal dance and tickled my ear, with still another because, when drinking a glass of water, she had a habit of holding the glass with both palms, with still another because she had the knack of keeping her pretty hair up without hair-pins, and with another still because she had a trick of saying the most unimportant and innocent things to me in a very low voice, as if dangerous spies were lurking all about us. I am an idiot, you say? Undoubtedly. But, unlike you, I am an *honest* idiot.

§ 14

Criticism.—Most so-called literary criticism is futile because it is too bookish. That is to say, it confines itself to a discussion of books, overlooking the fact that literature at best is no more than a function of life, and that it cannot be understood without considering the larger phenomena underlying it. Such criticism is comparable to a school of medicine which studied disease without any thought of the actual patient. One cannot understand such a man, say, as Dreiser without giving attention to the Indiana that he came out of and the New York that he lives in. The fact that this or that heroine of his says and does this or that is of much less importance to a comprehension of him as artist than the fact that the average American is a Methodist, and regards a baseball pitcher as the superior of Beethoven, and is a member of the Junior Order of United American Mechanics.

§ 15

Blonde Versus Brunette. — The blonde, on the average, appeals to the American male more often than her dusky sister for the same reason that

the American male is more often beguiled by light beers than by dark, by tan shoes than by black, by brilliant restaurants than by dimly lighted ones, by colorado claros than by colorado maduras, by yellow raincoats than by black, and by highly burnished gold jewelry than by gold jewelry with a dark Roman finish. What this reason is, *mon cher Armand, je ne sais pas.*

§ 16

Dazzling the Public.—The tendency of all men to magnify their trades by *escamoterie* is beautifully displayed in the case of the railway conductors. The work that a passenger conductor does is so simple and so trivial that any average eighteen-year-old boy could learn it in a week. Moreover, the notion that he carries an enormous responsibility, that the lives of his passengers depend upon his skill and diligence, is fully 99 per cent buncombe: all of the actual responsibility is upon the locomotive engineer. Nevertheless, the passenger conductors of the land, by parading before the public in florid uniforms and with heavy frowns upon their faces and by treating it in general as a German field-marshal might be expected to treat a mob of Socialist barbers, have so far convinced it of their importance that it consents readily to outrageous railway fares in order that they may be paid preposterous salaries, out of all reasonable proportion to their services. Of late the thing has gone even further. On many of the larger railways the conductor no longer deigns to collect tickets in person. Instead he stalks through the train with a so-called auditor, or adjutant, attending him, and this adjutant does all the actual work. And for this pompous parade the conductor is paid as much as a captain in the army!

In Europe the train conductor is paid probably one-fourth as much, and does ten times the work. He takes tips, but he earns them. A passenger who fees him may expect to get some service

from him. He looks after windows, hears complaints politely, and even helps with the baggage. An American conductor would be staggered by any suggestion that he do such things. His sole duty is to enforce the notion of his stupendous dignity, to cow the boobery with his august and judicial mien, to keep up the grotesque farce that has made him what he is.

§ 17

The Technique of Mystery.—Where in the so-called mystery or detective novel the exact opposite is more often true, the interest in the so-called mystery or detective play lies not in the manner of the author's detection of the guilty person, but in the manner of the author's concealment of him.

§ 18

High and Dry.—In the current doctrine that Prohibition is a mere passing imbecility—that the sturdy common sense and unquenchable love of liberty of the plain people will presently cause them to rise against it and put a swift end to it—in this notion I find myself unable to take anything properly describable as stock. On the contrary, I believe that Prohibition will survive, and, what is worse, that it will be enforced. My reasons for so holding are very simple. On the one hand, I deny that the plain people have any sturdy common sense; on the other hand, I deny that they have any love of liberty. The plain truth is that they are almost unanimously idiots and that they delight in being slaves. The most popular man under a democracy is not the most democratic man, but the most snif-fish and despotic man. The common folk delight in the exactions of such a man. They like him to boss them. Their natural gait is the goose-step.

It was predicted by romantics that the arrival of Prohibition would see the American workingman in revolt against its tyranny, with mills idle and industry

paralyzed. Certain boozy labour leaders even went so far as to threaten a general strike. No such strike materialized. Not a single American workingman uttered a sound. The only protests heard of came from a few barbarous foreigners, and these malcontents were quickly beaten into submission by the *Polizen*. In a week or two all the reserve stocks of beer were exhausted, and every jug of authentic hard liquor was emptied. Since then, save for an occasional swig of wood alcohol, the American workingman has been dry. Worse, he has also been silent. Not a sound has come out of him.

But his liver is full of bile? He nourishes an intolerable grievance? He will get his revenge at the polls? All moonshine! He will do nothing of the sort. He will actually do what he always does—that is, he will make a virtue of his necessity, and straightway begin believing that he *likes* Prohibition, that it is doing him a lot of good, that he wouldn't be without it if he could. This is the habitual process of thought of inferior men, at all times and everywhere. This is the sturdy common sense of the plain people.

§ 19

On Drama and the Acting of Drama.—Drama is the art of expressing human emotion in terms of eloquence. Acting is the art of expressing eloquence in terms of human emotion.

§ 20

Impossibility. — Some anonymous carper (probably Frank A. Munsey himself) in the *New York Sun and Herald*:

We have always been curious to see . . . a review by H. L. Mencken without the word *pishposh* in it.

In vain, dear Frank! How could one write a review of an American book without mentioning its contents?

§ 21

On War.—Viewing the lamentable degradation of war, one almost inclines to the hope that the enthusiasts who now propose to stop it forever will succeed. Once the noblest enterprise of superior men, it is now a mere combat of machinists, apothecaries, coal-miners, moralists and liars. The soldiers in the field are largely conscripts, all eager to get home as soon as possible. The commanders are slaves of the newspapers, made and broken at the word of such bounders as Northcliffe. The thing lacks all gallantry, all high romance, even all common decency. There is no room in it for a Marlborough, a Lafayette, a Prince Eugene. What was once a matter of individual enterprise and valour, a fight between brave men, now tends to become a mere battle between huge machines. Yesterday the danger that a soldier ran in the field was the danger of a duellist with sword in hand; tomorrow, if things go on, it will be the danger of a hog in a slaughter-house.

§ 22

Woman's Intuition.—What passes for woman's intuition is more often intrinsically nothing more than man's transparency. To argue that there is something almost occult in a woman's instinctive divination of the fact that a man likes her is to argue that there is something almost occult in a rat's instinctive divination of the fact that, close at hand, there is a piece of cheese.

§ 23

The Human Visage.—Probably the best portrait that I have ever seen in America is one of Theodore Dreiser by Bror Nordfeldt. Who this Bror Nordfeldt may be I haven't the slightest notion—a Scandinavian, perhaps. Maybe I have got his name wrong; I can't find any Nordfeldt in "Who's Who in America." But whatever his name he has painted Dreiser in a capital manner. The portrait not only shows the outward shell of the man; it also con-

veys something of his inner spirit—his simple-minded wonder at the mystery of life, his effort to escape pessimism, his genuine amazement before life as a spectacle. The thing is worth a hundred Sargents, with their slick lying, their childish facility, their general hollowness and tackiness. Sargent should have been a designer of candy-box tops. The notion that he is a great artist is one of the astounding delusions of the world. What keeps it going is the patent fact that he is a very dexterous craftsman—one who understands thoroughly how to paint, just as a good plumber knows how to plumb. But of genuine æsthetic feeling the man is almost as destitute as the plumber. His portrait of the four Johns Hopkins professors is probably the worst portrait ever palmed off on a helpless committee. But Nordfeldt, in his view of Dreiser, somehow gets the right effect. It is rough painting, but real painting. There is a knock-kneed vase in the foreground, and a bunch of flowers apparently painted with a shaving-brush—but Dreiser himself is genuine. More, he is made interesting. One sees at once that he is no common man.

The artist himself seems to hold the portrait in low esteem. Having finished it, he reversed the canvas and used the back for painting a vapid snow scene—a thing almost bad enough to go into a Fifth Avenue show-window. Then he abandoned both pictures. I discovered the portrait by accidentally knocking the snow scene off the wall. It has never been framed. Dreiser himself has probably forgotten it. . . . No, I do *not* predict that it will be sold to some Pittsburgh nail manufacturer, in 1950, for \$100,000. If it lasts two or three more years, unframed and disesteemed, it will be running in luck. When Dreiser is hanged, I suppose relic-hunters will make a search for it. But by that time it will have died as a doormat.

§ 24

The Penalty.—The science of psychological pathology is still in its infancy. In all its literature in three languages I can't find a line about the permanent ill effects of acute emotional diseases—say, for example, love affairs. The common assumption of the world is that when a love affair is over it is over—that nothing remains behind. This is probably grossly untrue. It is my belief that every such experience leaves scars upon the psyche, and that they are quite as plain and quite as dangerous as the scars left on the neck by anthrax. A man who has passed through a love affair, even though he may eventually forget the lady's very name, is never quite the same thereafter. His scars may be small, but they are permanent. The sentimentalist, exposed incessantly, ends as a psychic cripple; he is as badly off as the man who has gone through arthritis. The precise nature of the scars remains to be determined. My own notion is that they take the form of large yellow patches upon the self-respect. Whenever a man thinks of one of his dead love affairs, and in particular whenever he allows his memory to dredge up an image of the woman he loved, he shivers like one taken in some unmanly and discreditable act. Such shivers, repeated often enough, must inevitably shake his inner integrity off its base. No man can love, and yet remain truly proud. It is a disarming and humiliating experience.

§ 25

Hymn of Hate, with Coda.—If I hate any class of men in this world, it is Methodists, with their bellicose stupidity, their childish belief in devils, their barbarous hoofing of all beauty, dignity and decency. But even Methodists I do not hate when I see their wives.



The Match

By Lewis Brown

SUDDENLY Gotthard noticed the fire in his pipe had died out. He had not been smoking for a half-hour or more, although in all that time the pipe had not once left his mouth. He reached into his pocket for a match; he struck it. But he did not put it to the pipe. Instead he let the match burn idly. Fascinated, he watched the little flame grow. He gazed at it: a gaseous base of richest blue, a narrow band of brightened gray, a glorious mitre of whitened gold. Then he watched the flame die down. It fell. Then, with all its puny strength, it leapt into the air again. Thrice it leapt frantically; thrice it fell impotently. It hovered low, crestfallen. Then it rallied; but not to regain its glory now—merely to retain its life. Vain. The base and band and mitre all shrank. They merged into one, as if uniting against death. Useless. The tiny flame guttered and sank never to rise again. Only a great golden spark was left in the black and twisted wood. Then even that began to contract and tarnish. It divided in two, each half battling for itself. But again in vain. Each half shrank to the size of a pin-point—and died.

Only a black, withered splinter of wood remained.

Gotthard regarded it thoughtfully. Then to it he whispered sadly:

"You—you are like the life of man."

He sat motionless in his chair while mute night breezes came into the room and softly fondled his face. But he did not feel them. His whole being seemed lost in a slough of dismal thoughts as he sat there immobile and silent. Then suddenly, with an effort, he pulled himself together and unthinkingly, almost unconsciously, flicked the burnt match out of the window. He flicked it and it flew out into the vast blue-blackness of the night. It fell and was gone forever . . .

Then abruptly Gotthard sat up in his chair and in bewilderment regarded the hand that had thus cast away the match. Wide-eyed he stared at it until at last—he understood.

Slowly he shook his head. His mouth turned down at the corners and his lips curled cynically. And to his hand he whispered bitterly:

"And you—you are like the hand of God."



EVERY woman is a poem. Some women are poems by Algernon Charles Swinburne. Some are poems by Paul Verlaine. Some are poems by Franklin P. Adams.



The Renunciation

By *L. M. Hussey*

I

HAMMOND was pleased to find a home among these people. In his condition he saw nothing objectionable in their peculiarities. They interested him, both. Ethel Carton was naturally the more impressive personality, but Carton himself was interesting, if for nothing other than his extraordinary negligibility. Then, afterward, young Burton entered the scene. The atmosphere of their home might have depressed a healthy, unmeditative man, but it had no such effect upon Hammond.

He considered himself lucky to discover such an agreeable haven. During the first year of his physical misfortune he had lived in the private hospital of "specialists" who held out solemn hopes of curing him. After that he made the uncomfortable rounds of the sanatoriums, the mountain resorts, the baths, the spas. His paralysis remained unimproved; indeed, it progressed to a certain point where it became stationary. He could still move about a little, using a pair of canes.

Then he became resigned. He decided it was ridiculous to spend any more of his money on quacks and quack ideas. He found himself with a pronounced nostalgia for his home city and the few acquaintances whom he supposed might be persuaded to come and see him there. His parents were dead, but there was still a married sister to whom he could go, temporarily.

She received him decently enough; of course, he had no intention of staying with her permanently, or even for any considerable length of time. In addition to the fact that she obviously

did not wish to be encumbered with his care, he was not at ease in her home. The three children annoyed him. He desired a home in some very quiet household, amongst unobtrusive people, people who giving him certain necessities, would be otherwise indifferent to him.

It was in his sister's house that he met Ethel Carton.

She did not come there as a guest, but in a professional way; she gave piano lessons to the younger children and an hour of French every week to the older boy.

Hammond saw her first as she was seated at the piano, teaching little Helen to play five-finger exercises. He stumbled in upon them unexpectedly, and was about to excuse himself; the woman, with a swift comprehension, arose and begged him to come in and sit down; he could in no way disturb the lesson. She saw that it would be difficult for him to voyage to another room at that moment.

He took a seat near the window. Mrs. Carton resumed her place beside the child, and presently they began playing silly duets together, a thing that pleased little Helen.

He was interested and somewhat surprised by the aspect of this piano teacher. She looked less vapid than most of the women he had seen in that profession. She was tall and in her movements distinctly deliberate—she was the sort that gives one an impression of significant reserve, potentialities for action, for anger, for passion, perhaps even for joy. It was evident that her pupil, contrary to the frequent case, respected her.

Hammond described her face as

"controlled." His impression was that she carried on a certain war with herself, with obscure impulses within her breast. If anything else, she looked a little sullen.

Certainly her mouth had a touch of sullenness to it; the lips were full and what had been, no doubt, their curve in girlhood was now more firm. The lips drooped a trifle. The eyes were in keeping, for they were blue and not very warm. She wore her hair, which was plentiful and a real gold, in restrained coils, which were attractive on her well-shaped head.

The interesting observation coming to Hammond was that this woman, more than a little frigid now, could easily be otherwise, *had* been otherwise, in fact. Her aloof manner in no way repelled him. He felt that he would enjoy knowing her.

Perhaps it was his interest, his receptiveness, coupled with the impulse to compassion that his condition aroused, that made these two acquainted. They were formally introduced a few days later by his sister. After that Hammond made it a practice to be an unobtrusive listener during the piano lessons, and then he and Mrs. Carton usually had a little chat.

They were very impersonal talks; she said scarcely anything about herself. But they established, nevertheless, an air of sympathy between the two; either one would doubtless have been sure of the other's sympathy. And Hammond's initial interest and first friendly impression were sustained.

But it was not until after the passage of several months that the arrangement of living with the Cartons was effected.

It developed through Hammond's frank explanation of his circumstances.

"What I'm looking for," he told Mrs. Carton, "is some quieter place, where people will put up with a useless fellow like me. I can't stay with my sister forever. The sanatoriums are impossible."

His statement seemed to afford her some unusual radiation—and then she made her suggestion.

"I wonder would you be satisfied in our home?" she asked.

It was the first time she had ever used a form of "we," an acknowledgment of someone other than herself. Hammond knew that there must be a Mr. Carton, but speculation about him was very hazy and ambiguous; the fact that he had always remained unmentioned made of him something equivocal. Even now his existence had been no more than implied.

But Mrs. Carton's suggestion was very appealing. They talked the business over frankly and he finally determined on the venture. He was glad to go. In some way the change seemed promising. That was his vague impression and had he been asked to explain it he could never have done so.

II

Of course Hammond met the mysterious Mr. Carton immediately after taking up his quarters in the Carton household. As a matter of fact, there was nothing mysterious about the fellow—he was simply one of the world's ineffectuals. In personality he was agreeable, in a diffident sort of way. He had a tendency, Hammond thought, to be suspicious, although there was nothing definite upon which to base this idea.

Plainly, he was one of those who, beginning life with ideals of accomplishment beyond the capacity of their genius, had been easily defeated by the unidealistic and uncompassionate realism of existence. He had lost his illusions, and acquired no compensating armour of cynicisms for his protection. His was the sort that cannot forget their defeats, who live in the torment of a reiterated consciousness of failure. His front to the world only very thinly disguised his constant self-depreciation.

Physically he was a good-looking man, discounting his peculiar aspect of weakness. He was big enough, his head was well shaped, his features regular—the nose was a trifle too small for a man—and when he smiled his face

was often appealing. Although about forty, his dark hair was thick and disordered, like a boy's.

When unconscious of observation his brown eyes were mild and a little dreaming; when he looked at you his pupils seemed to contract, he frowned a little, and altogether the impression was that of one who needed the aid of glasses.

Hammond saw from the beginning that he had very little voice in the affairs of the household; Ethel Carton was the dominant one, through necessity.

By her teaching she contributed the main support. Carton made an uncertain few dollars as an itinerant photographer; it was a very ambiguous business, but Hammond found out presently that he was one of those who snap children and then endeavour to sell the finished photographs to their parents.

He had a little room in the house full of an immense number of photographs, somewhat interesting because most of them were of a fantastic nature.

He very soon became friendly with Hammond and little by little divulged the facts about his abandoned "ideals."

The fantastic photographs were nearly all the products of his earlier, enthusiastic years. He had gone in them for some sort of "artistic photography"; he had even dabbled around in chemicals, hoping to do something with colour photography. Hammond divined that he had deemed himself an artist, on the threshold of discovering a new art, that is, an art as significant as any of the major arts, like music or sculpture.

Witnessing the results of his efforts, which had been achieved mainly by means of a bagful of trivial tricks, with a touch here and there of unimportant originality, it all looked more or less silly. The man had obviously failed, but his was not the tragedy of an heroic failure. He was, rather, the victim of an absurd delusion.

However, Hammond found himself among interesting people. Moreover,

he seemed to have arrived at a time when something was in the air; he felt that almost immediately.

There was, in fact, a change in Ethel; she was subtly different from the woman whom he had met several months before. She gave him the impression of a more profound repression, as if, in the obscure battles of her heart, fresh causes and fresh necessities were clamouring for a voice.

Yet it was not until some weeks had passed that Hammond connected the tense atmosphere with the appearances of Arthur Burton, who was almost the sole visitor to that house.

Burton was so young and merely because of his youth so seemingly negligible that the knowledge of his influence came with the shock of an intense surprise.

Hammond first saw the boy shortly after taking up his quarters with the Cartons and soon he became accustomed to him as a frequent visitor—he was there three or four times a week.

He had come to know Carton in some way—it was Carton himself who brought him the first time. In the beginning he and Carton used to talk a little about art and occasionally the latter, in a temporary condition of spiritual recrudescence, would state some of those beliefs in which he no longer had the courage of faith.

They used to sit together in the little living room, Ethel apart from the rest. She seldom entered into the conversation; she ignored her husband's opinions. And it came to Hammond that these same ideas, this ridiculous "art," must have intrigued her at one time—how long ago!

Watching her, seeing the full slope of her shoulders as she sat at the piano, the slight movements of her arms as she touched the keys into aimless melodies that were scarcely material enough for sound, the slightly backward-tilt of her fine head revealing those severe strands of coiled gold, Hammond experienced a compassionate emotion, mingled with a depressing knowledge.

How ruthlessly the years go, he thought; they had passed over this woman without pity, yet she was courageous—if she had lost her dreams, at least she yielded none of her pride.

She and Burton seldom conversed. They almost seemed to avoid each other. Once or twice Hammond thought that probably she held all her husband's acquaintances in the same estimation as Carton himself.

Then it developed that young Burton could play the piano. Perhaps he had been diffident, but certainly he had concealed his skill for a long time.

Ethel was a really able performer. She played a little heavily perhaps; she had a masculine touch. Burton was persuaded to try duets with her, and after they had played together every time he came. They seemed to do it as a duty, without desire, without pleasure, as if commanded. Hammond wondered whether Carton specially desired this performance.

During the duet playing Hammond and Carton sat across the room, at times conversing languidly; often they were silent.

It was after this that Hammond pointedly noticed the curiously strained atmosphere that seemed now to infect the house like a miasma.

One evening he experienced his startling revelation.

Carton was not in the room. With the same air of being forced to it, the two were playing as usual. They came to the end; Ethel Carton turned a little on the bench and simultaneously young Burton moved his face to the side and their eyes met.

They seemed to hold each other by a sudden, potent spell. Hammond could see the boy's profile; he had a very fine face. The features were carved out definitely, with a delicacy that was almost extreme. The lips were sensitive; he was usually pale. There was a touch of severity about his face that contrasted with his youth.

They were looking at each other steadfastly. Neither moved. The watcher felt that in this instant they

were wholly oblivious of him, unconscious of all save their own disarming emotions. The boy's eyes seemed to widen, to fill with moisture, to glow. And into Ethel Carton's face there came a flush like the colour of a secret, almost shameful blossoming.

It was she who broke the enchantment. She sprang up—and saw Hammond looking at her. Her cheeks paled at once. She stood near the bench in an immobility that was nearly statuesque; Hammond dropped his eyes and a desperate fear that she would fail in her manifest effort to control herself made him clench his fingers together into tight fists.

But she spoke, a little hurriedly, yet nevertheless in a voice that was almost normal.

"Where's Harry?" she asked.

"Upstairs, I think," Hammond answered.

"Must see what he's about . . ." she murmured.

She hurried out of the room without looking at Burton.

Then Hammond understood that these two were, appallingly, in love.

III

THE knowledge startled him; it distressed him enormously, and at the same time it seemed unbelievable.

It came to him how little, after all, he knew of Ethel Carton—how little we really know of anyone. He had grown very fond of her, and grateful to her also, for she had given him an interest in life. That is, an interest in herself, and even in Carton, her ineffectual companion, and in the circumstances and affairs surrounding her hours. He felt that they were in sympathy, *en rapport*, sincerely friendly. And now she seemed to pass into a world that was walled off from his participation.

Yet, thinking about it that night, he began to excuse her. After all, he had always felt that there was an ardour beneath her reserve, and in young Barton she doubtless found those qualities

of courage and hope that aroused a strong response in her own courageous heart.

But what would be the end? He firmly believed there would be no end, no definite break, no disaster, after all. If she did not love Carton she was faithful to him, even compassionate of him, and if she held him in contempt, contempt itself is sometimes an emotion that binds like love.

But, as it happened, he was wrong in supposing himself outside the new developments.

The next morning, after Carton had left the house, Ethel came into the room where he was reading and took a chair near his own. He laid down his book and met her eyes.

She was frowning a little. Her face betrayed no weakness, seemed foreign to all soft emotions.

"I wanted to talk to you about last night," she said.

Hammond was surprised and at once uncomfortable. He was uncertain, too, whether he had taken the proper significance from her words.

"I was bored," he replied. "I'm glad you came in to talk to me."

She ignored the casual nature of his answer and satisfied his perplexity at once.

"I know that you saw!" she said.

He could discover no appropriate comment. She continued in an almost cold voice.

"I'm not going to do anything foolish. But I've learned some very startling things about myself."

"Were you so sure of yourself?" Hammond asked.

"I was—in a way. I felt that if Harry had disappointed me it was not his fault. I had no right to blame him—I should have foreseen. Perhaps, after all, I was too ambitious, I wanted more than he ever had to give. Well—I'm not going to destroy him now!"

There seemed nothing out of place in her words, no egotistic assumption. She took for granted Hammond's entire understanding, and he did understand, fully. It was as she said: if

Carton had nothing to give her, save regrets, she was entirely necessary to him, however unworthy he might be of any sacrifice.

He simply nodded.

"I fell into this as if it were a trap," she confessed. "I was almost unconscious of that boy at first. And then I began to notice him. He made me uncomfortable. His very diffidence was disturbing, for that implied that he was conscious of me. And then, just a little at a time, he began to revive emotions I had forgotten—just by looking at me. Oh, you may not believe it of me, but I was terrified. I felt as if a new fate were hanging over my head. He made me see that we never get old enough to outlive all our dreams!"

She said the last sentence bitterly, like an accusation, and at the same time the knowledge of it flushed her cheeks as he had seen them flush the evening before; that flush transfigured her.

Hammond felt that she was beautiful, that hers was the rare soul, and then he comprehended the magnitude of her sacrifice. An ardour burned in her heart and there it had smouldered for years uneasy by any corresponding flame in one whom she might have worthily loved. Illusion is persistent until disillusion comes; for her the illusion of love still persisted since no one had ever come before to burn out that passionate ardour within her. Yet Hammond did not pity her, for even then she seemed too strong for pity.

"I had no chance to avoid it," she said. "You know I would have done so. Yet, now that it's happened, I'm not ashamed. Understand, there's nothing between us, no acts. He hasn't spoken a caressing word to me, and if I can help it, he never will. Meanwhile—"

She shrugged her shoulders, a gesture of commingled resignation and despair. What was she to do? Certainly Hammond, a man living half in the entrance of death, could not counsel her.

She stood in the room, looking down upon her confidant, and in that mo-

ment there came to him a knowledge of his own futility that embittered him. Understanding so well, it seemed irrational that he could not help, was powerless to rearrange these lives, Ethel Carton's, her husband's, and the other's. He felt that he was bound to these people and in a subtle way responsible for them. But he said nothing, and he knew that he could only wait.

Then, after this, he began to observe Carton's suspicions.

This new factor rather altered the focus of his attention. Carton became more vital in his eyes, and, in a degree, less negligible. He came closer to the man's humanity, closer to the secret impulses of Carton's heart. And he found it impossible to imagine what might happen to this man if Ethel were gone.

It was useless to assure himself that the fellow was no more than a flabby sentimentalist. Hammond was too imaginative to dismiss Carton's fate to terms of a formula.

However, there were no signs of an immediate catastrophe. Carton's suspicions were, indeed, a little irrational, for surely he was provided with little ground for them. Young Burton came as usual; they all talked together; the customary mechanical duets were performed together, but in no way did these two betray their secret wanting. If anything, Ethel Carton was cold to the boy—and it may have been this very coldness that aroused Carton's attention. If this were true, it was surprising that he had felt such a subtle change in the atmosphere. You did not think of him as a finely observant man.

Nevertheless, he was different. In the evenings Hammond would catch him looking at his wife and he appeared to be thinking about her, and cogitating upon his own relations to her in a way that had never been his habit before. His eyes, ordinarily vacant and ineffectual, were often expressive. Hammond observed meanings in them, and emotions.

Once, as they were sitting down to the dinner table and Burton, who was a guest that evening, passed close to

Ethel and in passing brushed her dress with his shoulder, Hammond found Carton staring at his wife with widened eyes of real terror.

Suddenly he understood then that the man was truly terrified, that he foresaw a great disaster, that out of the welter of his half-emotions there had arisen a definite and overmastering one—the emotion of his own helplessness. Then Carton, too, was in love.

It was a passion that mingled ridiculous folly with an intensity fully as great as that which tortured the other one, young Burton. The boy's was less pathological, and burned a clearer flame, and was repressed only through superficial necessity, but this man loved also, and he, too, found expression denied him. How was Carton to make love to his own wife? He was not wholly a fool, in spite of his failures. He knew that there was no rebirth of early dreams for him. He could only fear, and wait.

Upon Burton the effect of this strained, static atmosphere was evident. Hammond could see a physical difference; he was more pale, he carried himself with a certain peculiar rigidity, and often he was inattentive during casual conversation.

He avoided Ethel Carton, her eyes, the sight of her face, her words, any nearness to her. His visits were less frequent and when he came he gradually grew restless and made an early departure.

Hammond often wondered why he persisted in coming there. Why didn't he stay away altogether—that would have been the solution of an impossible problem. But he seemed to lack the strength; he had the strength for repression, but not for entire renunciation.

But it was not reasonable to suppose that such a state of affairs could persist for long.

IV

IN considering the events that followed Hammond could not fairly ac-

cuse Ethel Carton of a breach of faith. If she had changed her mind, she had good reason—and she was in no way bound to make him the confidant of her decisions.

But he was surprised when Carton came to him with his disclosures.

Carton, burdened down with his apparatus, usually went out in the morning and did not return earlier than the late afternoon. On this day he arrived before three o'clock.

Hammond was alone in the house. Ethel had been gone since morning.

He was in the sitting room, reading. He heard Carton's step below—there was even a distinctive quality in his step; it was too soft, too undecided. Then he heard Carton ascending the stairs. There he seemed to pause and it was several minutes before he came softly through the corridor and entered the sitting room.

Turning to greet him, Hammond was startled by his appearance. He looked positively disheveled, although a closer scrutiny showed that his clothes were in fairly good order; his coat collar was turned under and his hair rumpled up, but no more. What really lent his whole figure the semblance of extraordinary disorder was the expression of his face, and the crumpled slouch of his body.

He looked beaten, he looked exhausted.

His eyes were like those of a whipped dog. His arms hung down in complete flexion; his knees were bent; it seemed impossible for him to stand erect.

Hammond's question arose spontaneously to his lips.

"What's the matter with you?" he asked.

The question, even the mere sound of a human voice, appeared to startle Carton, as if he had been unaware of the other man's presence. He turned his eyes on the invalid and for some seconds stared at him idiotically.

"Can I do anything?" Hammond asked.

Carton shook his head.

"Nobody can do anything" he said.

These words, uttered in a tone of profound dejection, apparently brought him a measure of rationality. He crossed the room and sank into a chair.

"I think she's going to leave me," he said.

He assumed Hammond's knowledge and so the latter took up his assumption, seeing no reason for pretense. He waited for him to continue.

"If she goes, I can't stop her," he went on. "I've no claim on her. I've disappointed her. She expected something of me—well, I failed. I know well enough I've failed, but I can't tell you why. Anyway, I've no claim over her. I can't do anything. . . ."

It was plain to Hammond that he wanted to talk, that to confess was better than the torment of his silent thoughts. And, perhaps by talking, despite his statement of disbelief, he hoped to see some light, a way out, a way to save himself. He was without shame in his weakness. He admitted his dependence upon Ethel Carton utterly.

The incidents of his story were only dramatic when considered in the light of that other drama, the actless drama of emotions played out between these three. In the city he had encountered the two together. They were walking arm in arm; Burton was leaning close to his wife and she looking up into his face, smiling.

It was her smile that unnerved Carton, that betrayed her entirely, that left no straw of hopeful doubt. It was a smile that he remembered, coming back to him through the fog of grey years; in this way she had once smiled at him!

Then the three encountered each other, face to face.

Ethel and her lover were caught as if trapped, and neither had the aplomb to drive the startled looks from their faces.

They all paused, there on the pavement, staring at each other. Burton was the first to recover; he took off

his hat and bowed. The woman made no gesture of recognition.

"She looked at me with her face as white as snow," Carton said, "and her eyes were very cold."

Then Burton took her arm again, said something or other that Carton did not hear, and the two went on together, leaving Carton behind them like a derelict.

It was useless for Hammond, the confession completed, to offer any palliative remarks. He understood the full significance of that meeting, however slight it might have been in actual incident, and he knew that the man before him comprehended also.

After Carton left he gave himself up to surprised reflections. Then they were seeing each other in secret! Ethel had failed in her determination! It must have begun recently, for he recalled all their meetings in the house and could remember nothing but the strain of their repression. Perhaps that very day was the first one of their meeting, their first compromise—and already disastrous.

Ethel came home late in the afternoon and complained of being ill. She went directly to her room and did not appear for dinner, which was attended by Carton and Hammond, eating together in silence.

Evidently she found herself unequal to the task of sitting down with them and pretending that nothing had happened—and, on the other hand, unequal to a crisis, to a straightforward facing of the situation, and an understanding.

The more Hammond thought about it, the less possibility of an understanding he could see. It worried him excessively. He was rather a simple-minded man, lacking the cynicism to dismiss the whole matter and let it take its course without his concern. And, also, he liked these people. He felt a sincere affection for Ethel Carton and however detached might have been his viewpoint in considering the general fatality of mankind, this specific situation touched his heart intimately.

In the morning Carton left as usual,

without seeing his wife. She still remained in her room.

It was late in the morning and Hammond was downstairs, when she descended and confronted him.

He saw that she was dressed to go out. She wore a brown suit, in which her figure looked slender and restrained; her face was covered by a veil and beneath this her eyes looked out coldly. She had a traveling bag in her hand. It was this that startled Hammond.

"I came in here to tell you goodbye—for a while," she said.

Her voice was very steady. Hammond looked up at her gravely.

"Goodbye?" he questioned.

For the first time in their relationship Ethel Carton, under the strain of her determination, showed petulance.

"Oh, don't look at me so solemnly!" she exclaimed. "You don't mean to tell me now that you *also* have a claim on my life?"

She stared at him angrily for a moment and then, her shoulders drooping a little, she crossed the room swiftly and placed her hand on his arm.

"Forgive me, dear friend," she said. "I'm horribly upset. I couldn't make up my mind until early this morning—although I promised Arthur yesterday. I don't know which would have taken the most strength, to stay or to go. At any rate—I'm going."

Hammond looked up into her tense face.

"When will we see each other again?" he asked, quietly.

She laughed a little, with a touch of hysteria.

"I don't know what Arthur's plans are," she said. "Think of it! For the first time since I was a little girl I have someone else to make plans for me, someone else to arrange affairs for me . . ."

Her voice became a trifle defiant, as if, in explaining the luxury of dependence, she justified herself in her purpose. But obviously this carried very little real weight in the councils of her determination. She was too used to

self-reliance to find anything peculiarly attractive in dependence. What was taking her away was love, the insanity of romance, the madness of awakened dreams.

Softening again, she sat down near Hammond and touched his arm with her gloved hand. She began to speak of herself and the boy. She told him that she could not foresee their future.

"For the first time in years," she said, "I'm able to repress all thought of what may happen to me, to anyone. I'm ready to live just for this instant!"

As she continued to speak to him, Hammond heard less and less the words she said, for he was thinking of Carton. After all, in spite of his seeming negligibility, Carton was the unaccountable factor in this situation. It was impossible to predict what he might do, and how the break would affect him. He was suddenly a figure of importance, full of potentialities. He might react in any way, in a hundred startling ways.

And it was whilst he nursed these thoughts that Carton himself appeared.

He must have come back under the urge of a premonition that was not to be denied its actual evidence. He entered softly, and the two saw him standing in the door, looking into the room.

He ignored Hammond's presence. His eyes were fastened only on his wife. They passed over her person; they dwelt a second on the leather bag standing in the center of the room. And then—as if from the effect of a diabolic discovery—there spread over his face an expression of profound terror.

His cheeks whitened, his lips parted, and his eyes opened widely. He stared at his wife. There was no pleading in his face, but fright only, real terror. He was perfectly motionless. One hand clenched the edge of his rumpled coat.

Ethel Carton arose.

For some seconds these two faced each other.

Carton's expression did not change,

and he seemed incapable of speech.

Hammond saw the woman's cheeks flush and a moment later he was astonished to see her turn and go over abruptly to the little table at the side of the room. She raised her hands and pulled the pins out of her hat. She took her hat off and laid it on the table, she began to pull at the fingers of her gloves.

Very unexpectedly Carton spoke.

"What are you doing that for?" he asked.

To Hammond's ears his voice sounded extraordinarily *natural*! The tenseness of the situation had affected the invalid profoundly. He expected anything but the ordinary from the actors in this drama; it seemed to him that everything should have changed in keeping with their actions—even the colour of their voices.

"Because I'm going to stay!" she replied.

For just a second, as these words came to his ears, Carton was motionless. Then he took a forward step. His face was shining—with hope! An astounding, appalling expectancy possessed his features, transfiguring them. He looked at Ethel Carton and his repressed adoration leapt into his face shamelessly, like a betrayal.

Perhaps she saw, but she gave him no response. After all, as Hammond reasoned, she was now too disillusioned for response. She had discovered the illusion of love with another man; she could not accept it now with Carton. Whatever his power over her—and it was strong enough to bring about this supreme denial of her new dreams—he could not expect that.

For a second or two she stood there by the little table, as if, after taking that decision, she swiftly reflected upon her reasons for it. No doubt she explained it to herself in many ways, in terms of her pity, her memories, her past hopes, her forgotten dreams. Whatever emotions within the obscure depths of her heart had stayed her purpose she knew this to be true: having given so much of her life to this man, in the last in-

stant she found it impossible not to give more.

She turned abruptly, picked up the leather bag, and almost as if she did not see Carton, as if, although making her renunciation for him he was too negligible for her thought, she brushed by him out into the hall.

Hammond heard her ascending the stairs to her room.

Carton stepped into the room, dropped into a chair, and stared down at the carpet. He was trembling a little. The betraying expression of hope had vanished from his face.



Patron Saints

By Hortense Flexner

UPON my littered desk they stand,
Lincoln in bronze, Jeanne d'Arc in gray,
Neighbours most strangely by my hand,
Dear patron saints, mad worlds away.

The bleak worn man, the earnest girl,
I wonder what they might have said
Across the bridge of mist and pearl—
Young Trust-in-Dreams and Bending-Head.

But who shall tell, for these have known
High dreams and flaming swords, the pride
Of battles won—and last, alone,
The paltry men for whom they died.



THE only difference between the sensation of kissing a Boston girl for the first time and of diving off Brooklyn Bridge in a January blizzard clad in a copy of yesterday's New York *Journal* is that in the latter case you at least know that you may get your name in the newspapers.



NICE girl: One who likes you.



Men I Have Proposed To

By June Gibson

I

Maurice

HE was tall and broad, with smooth blond hair and eyes that were the deep blue of wood violets. He was faultless of grooming. When he entered the room, the eyes of the women narrowed like buttercup blooms at sundown. Like contestants in a race, each endeavoured to be the first to reach his side. They hovered about him as bees hover about the honeysuckle blossoms—stinging one another. They flattered him, laughing when he laughed; his words seemed to be their nourishment.

I decided to make Maurice propose to me.

When we were presented, I yawned slightly and moved toward the terrace.

II

Claudius

HE was a professor of zoölogy. An acquaintance brought him to tea. He was staid and stolid, and as ugly as the ruins of a building after a fire. Among my guests were many lovely women. He was as eager to win their favour as a dog, scenting a rabbit, is keen to be loosed from his leash. He knew nothing of small talk; his manners were crude; I saw that he was boring them almost to distraction. I moved toward him. I was the most beautiful woman in the room.

"Tell me something of your work," I said.

He talked for an hour, in a monotonous drone.

SS—May—4

" . . . So why vituperate the tockay? The tody is an insectivorous bird. . . ."

As he spoke he trembled like a footbridge over which a runaway horse gallops; his eyes devoured my beauty as candelabra eat up the gloom.

I decided to make Claudius propose to me.

I ran my slim finger through a wisp of hair that curled over his left ear.

III

Reginald

I HEARD a roué airing his views.

"When I marry," he said, "my wife and I must be in perfect accord. My habits are formed, and I enjoy my vices. Her experience must match mine. Nicotine and liqueurs must not be unknown to her."

I agreed with him and told him I always smoked with the men I knew; he invited me to try one of his bronze-tipped cigarettes that had been sent from Rome. As he struck a match, I recalled the innumerable times I had huddled in my hall, the scent of Benedictine on my lips, until the servants came; of the continuous train of cigarettes I had smoked, lighting one from the other, until my doctor warned me; of my lovers. . . .

I decided to make Reginald propose to me.

Gazing innocently at him with my eyes widened like a child's, I stuck the cigarette in the center of my lips, plunging the bronze tip into the little match flame.

IV

No. 687

AN institution for the insane adjoined our estate. One day, out of curiosity, I scaled the wall and peered over into the asylum garden. One of the inmates was pacing up and down a mignonette-fringed walk. I spoke to him, but he ignored me. This annoyed me. I am very beautiful, with eyes as green as the deep sea; I have the grace of smoke issuing from a narrow chimney. Men do not usually scorn me.

Each day I scaled the wall and watched No. 687 as he wandered through the garden, sad-visaged, lugubrious sighs escaping him. One day I questioned a warden.

I decided to make No. 687 propose to me.

That evening, when the moon had climbed to the top of the sky, I appeared on the garden wall. In my slender hand I held a fragrant, full-blown rose. Below me strolled No. 687, gazing amorously at the moon.

"Romeo!" I called softly.

V

Silas

FAINT shadows, the colour of the hills at twilight, lay below my eyes, so I summured at a farm-house in the country where there was plenty of fresh white milk and creamy yellow butter. In the fields was a tall lad, with cheeks swarthy and bronze, and hair the colour of moonless night. I loved to watch him as he pitched the golden hay; his was the liteness of a doe jumping across a creek. One day I carried his lunch to him in a shining pail that tinkled at contact with my long string of amber beads that swayed as I swung across the meadow. We sat together beneath a hayrick and talked. Through the trees we saw a young farm-girl in a gingham gown.

"I am saving all my love for her," he said shyly. "We planned to marry when we were little children. I do not flit from one to another. The Loreleis

of big cities do not charm me." The tint of sunsets surged to his cheeks. "I have never kissed a woman."

As I pressed my soft, fragrant lips against his, his awkward smack filled me with desire for mirth.

I decided to make Silas propose to me.

"Si, you devil!" I ejaculated wryly. "And you said you weren't experienced! Oh—you men!"

VI

Isaac

I AM as beautiful as a desert sunset. My gowns are as sheer and clinging as the webs that fat spiders weave in the wisteria vines. My joy lies in exquisite gowning. I never tire of draping pale shades of mauve and lilac and lemon about my slim figure. My fans of long, curling ostrich feathers delight me; my jewels are chosen to harmonize with my gowns.

But most important of all is my fragrance. I affect an Egyptian perfume. The dizzying redolence of Nile queens follows my presence like the gulls that follow the boats in San Francisco Bay. My fragrance is more famous than Pisa's Leaning Tower. When I arrived from Paris, all were eager to meet me. Women yearned to learn the name of my entrancing perfume; perfumers begged me for its formula.

Among those that thronged about me was the man they told me was going to be the richest man in America. My friends explained to me about him, how he was amassing his great wealth, and we laughed because he looked as if he desired to throttle me. When we were presented, I said:

"I am giving a reception tomorrow, Mr. Solomon. Will it please you to attend?"

He muttered a surly acquiescence and left, glowering.

I decided to make Isaac propose to me.

Isaac Solomon came to my reception. Across the room I saw him watching me, hate in his eyes. Reporters circled about me like vultures; famous per-

fumers, beseeching me for the secret of my famous scenting, sounded like a jazz band.

"It smells more wonderful than ever today," they marvelled.

I dismissed them all, and moved toward Isaac Solomon. As I approached, his fat face beamed. . . .

From the folds of my gown arose the blatant odour of "Solomon's Sweet-Stuff Perfume."

VII

Ralph

RALPH was a clerk in Senator Oliphant's office. He was drab and anemic, with thin yellow hair, bowed legs, and a quivering chin. His movements resembled those of a bird hopping among bread crumbs. He trembled at sudden noises and blushed when spoken to. And he worshipped Senator Oliphant more than he did his Maker. Even abuse from the Senator was sweeter than days before the Eighteenth Amendment. He considered Senator Oliphant the greatest man that ever lived; Ralph would gladly have burned at the stake to have saved him from getting his boots muddy.

I had business with the Senator. The day before I was to call at his office I saw him on the street. Ralph was with him. The dumb devotion of Ralph was like that of the lion from whose foot the youth Androcles drew the thorn.

I decided to make Ralph propose to me.

The next day I entered the Senator's office. Ralph, trembling and stuttering, came toward me. I held out my hand to him and smiled with the radiance of a June midday.

"Good morning, Senator," I said. "I do hope you'll forgive me for being late."

VIII

Oliver

OLIVER had never been ill a day in his life. The taste of tonics was unknown to him. He could walk twenty miles without tiring. If there was any-

thing heavy to be lifted, Oliver was always called for. If someone must journey through a snowstorm for a doctor, it was Oliver who went, because Oliver never caught cold. No one ever discussed disease or operation with Oliver, because disease and operation were as unknown to his experiences as matches to gunpowder. Everyone envied him his splendid good health. They would pat him on the back and say:

"Never been sick a day in your life, have you, Ollie?"

Oliver called. He was as healthy-looking as a prize fighter primed for a bout. As he entered, it was as if a fresh gust of wind were sweeping through the room.

"Never been sick a day in my life," he boasted. . . .

I decided to make Oliver propose to me.

I eyed him anxiously. "You seem a little pale today, a bit fatigued." I arose to place pillows behind him, to poke the fire, and ordered a servant to bring him something in a glass. "Are you sure you feel quite well?"

IX

No. 912

I WAS interested in prison reform. Each day I would go to the penitentiary with a committee of women and write down tiresome statistics in a notebook. The hard, ugly faces of the prisoners offended me; the musty cells chilled my body. I wondered if there was one interesting man confined within the gray walls.

One day I noticed a handsome prisoner gazing at me through narrow eyes the colour of orange pekoe. I moved toward him.

"You are like a woodland animal that has been caged," I said.

"For two years not a ray of light has drifted through the bars of my cell," he said. "But, lady, since you've been coming, the whole prison's flooded with sunshine. I feel that you will understand. Oh, lady, they say I'm a crook. I swear it's false. I'm an honest man."

Remember Dreyfus and what they did to him," he whined.

While he talked he deftly removed the diamond brooch from my gown.

I decided to make No. 912 propose to me.

"Say, kid," I whispered. "I'm in the game myself. I just snatched that brooch from one of the dames I came with. When do you get out?"

X

Chauncey

CHAUNCEY was a Methodist minister. His eyes were as expressionless as a faded photograph; his nose was long and pinched; his lips were thin. A smile on his face was as frequent as

a Jewish membership in the Knights of Columbus. He called each day on his parishioners and spoke graphically of the torments of hell.

He came to see me one morning before I had dressed. I was curled up on a drawing-room divan like a Persian kitten, nibbling toast as I read something of Gautier. As he slunk into my presence, I emitted a soprano shriek and sped behind a curtain.

"Mr. de Lancey," I gasped, "I am in negligée!"

"Do not fear, dear sister," he said hollowly. "I am a minister of the Gospel. . . ."

I decided to make Chauncey propose to me.

"You are a man," I said.



Meditation

By Traver Briscoe

THE trouble with Boston society is that so many of its members are climbers.

The trouble with Chicago society is that so many of its members are climbers.

The trouble with Washington society is that so many of its members are climbers.

The trouble with Philadelphia, Baltimore, San Francisco and St. Louis society is that so many of its members are climbers.

The trouble with New York society is that so many members of Boston, Chicago, Washington, Philadelphia, Baltimore, San Francisco and St. Louis society are climbers.



IF a woman merely says "Good-bye," come back the next day. But if she has you thrown out by the butler, better wait a week or so.



Corinna and Her Man

By Thyra Samter Winslow

I

CORINNA had always objected to her mother's attitude toward her father—to the attitude of other women she knew toward their husbands. She spoke frequently to her mother about it, even when she was a young girl.

"Ma," she had said, "I don't see why you slave so over Pa. Your whole life is made up of worrying over him and about him. He doesn't pay any attention except to sort of expect it and take it for granted. You spend hours getting dinner and having it on the table, hot, the minute he gets home. He never notices, unless something goes wrong. He just eats. You're always picking out things he likes or that are good for him, and having those instead of what *you* like. First thing in the morning you scurry around the kitchen and make me help, getting breakfast, and you hurry home afternoons to get dinner. You don't dare to ask people to the house evenings, like Miss Herron, if he doesn't like them. You treat him so carefully, always trying not to worry him or annoy him—always telling me 'your Pa won't like that,' when I do things. I wouldn't live like you, you bet."

Mrs. Ferguson was a nervous, round little woman, full of quick, meaningless little movements. She had a large, rather flat face, full of small but not disfiguring wrinkles. She had always smiled, patiently, at Corinna.

"You don't know your Pa," she'd say, "or men. Men have got to be waited on, got to be treated right. Wait until you're grown up and married—

you'll find out. Men have got to have their meals on time and got to have the house the way they want it, neat if they are neat, full of people if they like things lively. You don't know men."

"Huh," Corinna had sneered, "you bet I'll never make a slave of myself for any man. If I ever marry, the man'll do what *I* want. I shan't be always worrying for fear I'm doing the wrong thing."

Yet, looking among her mother's acquaintances and at the parents of her own friends, she noticed the existence of this same state of affairs that so annoyed her in her own family. The man was always being catered to. When he was at home, if at no other time, the house had to move along with an outward smoothness. Little unpleasant things were hidden away. All of the plans of the household were for amusing, entertaining, the man. If he liked to play cards, the cards were brought out immediately after dinner and one game followed another. The man could quarrel with the plays of the others, if he wanted to, grumble at his own ill-luck, at the playing of his partners—it was all accepted with an assumed merriment as a part of life. If the man liked to read, his chair, the most comfortable in the house, was drawn up before the best light, and the children, when there were children, had to talk quietly so as not to disturb him.

"The man, the man, always the man," thought Corinna. "Just because he brings home the money. The women pretend to joke about being home on time, about slaving for him, but they do it just the same. You bet when I'm married things won't be like that. This

is a newer generation. It's about time to quit worshipping the man, making such a fuss over him, slaving for him."

Corinna, who was, in her way, thoughtful, somewhat of a philosopher, worried a little over it. She didn't like to think that, in each household, one person—the male head of the house—should govern things so thoroughly, blindly. She didn't believe especially in woman's suffrage, she wasn't interested in voting, she knew women couldn't invent things—at least she knew *she* couldn't; she wasn't interested in science or art, things like that. She just didn't like the idea of being subservient to—cowed by—a man. Why—she knew men.

In spite of her mother, she realized that men weren't superior people, after all. They were rather more stupid than women on the whole, a bit heavy, with a thick sense of humour. Men were ashamed to show emotions, easy victims to flattery. Of course they were all right to marry. A girl ought to marry. An old maid sort of admits that she can't get a man. Being married gives one a sense of being somebody. Marriage was all right—only married women ought to learn—oughtn't to be such fools, making themselves servants and slaves and an admiring audience, all in one. She wouldn't.

II

BECAUSE Corinna's parents were poor, when she finished high school, at eighteen, she knew she had to do something to support herself until such time as marriage should relieve her of the necessity of buying her own clothes and helping at home. She felt that school-teaching required too much training—would be tiresome—and, besides, most teachers became old maids in the end. She didn't want to go into a store. She had no special talent or ambition. So she went to a business college and, after eight months—she was not very clever or quick in learning word-signs—she was able to take a business letter with fair rapidity and transcribe it with some

degree of accuracy on the typewriter.

She liked the profession of stenographer. It was decent, dressy. She even looked ahead to becoming someone's private secretary, wearing good clothes and sweeping in, half an hour later than the other stenographers, to an office marked "private," being consulted on numerous business problems—saving the firm money by her wisdom—and maybe marrying the boss in the end.

Her first position lasted two months, her next three. Then she got with a wholesale hardware concern and took dictation a bit more rapidly from the stove buyer, a married man who had four children and who was always worrying about catching cold. She settled down, fairly comfortably, making enough money to wear nice clothes, arriving at the office always a bit late in the morning, always anxious to leave a little before five at night, wasting too much time at noon or in the cloakroom gossiping with the other girls, but, on the whole, as good as the firm expected of her.

Corinna's evenings were spent at dances or the theater or going to bed at seven to make up for lost sleep. She accepted invitations from anyone who asked her—men she met at the office or through girls, old school acquaintances. She didn't care particularly for any of them, but wanted to be with men, especially those who wore good clothes and knew how to treat a girl. She was lively and vivacious, rather a pretty girl in a light, indistinct way, with a nice mouth and a pretty little nose.

This smoothness of days at the office, and of evenings having a good time, continued until Corinna was twenty. Then she fell in love.

She had been waiting, poised, to fall in love for a long time. She had been eagerly looking for love, watching every man she met with a kind of painful eagerness, ready to yield affection at the first opportunity. She met the fellow at a semi-public dance, where she was taken by a boy she had met at business college. The man she fell in love

with was named Rodney Cantwell and her escort had known him and had introduced them.

All night, after that first meeting, the name "Rodney, Rodney," went through her mind. Rodney Cantwell! He was quite wonderful, all that a man one loved ought to be. He was tall, with light, rather rough hair, which he brushed back from his forehead in an uneven sweep. His eyes seemed a mysterious blue-gray. He held them half-closed, squinting when he laughed. He danced better than anyone Corinna had ever danced with. He asked her to go to a dance with him the following week.

All week Corinna lived in a sort of delirium. She borrowed money from her mother and bought a new evening dress of flimsy pink silk, with no wearing qualities—Corinna usually was rather careful to get durable things. She thought of nothing but Rodney, to the detriment of her dictation and the stove-buyer's temper.

On Saturday night, when Rodney called, she met him with a delicious lump of expectancy in her throat. She learned, suddenly, without experience, a new coquetry. Before this, she had been, with the boys and young men she knew, more or less natural, as natural, that is, as girls ever are with men. There had been a sort of decent companionship. Suddenly, this was changed.

On the way to the dance she found herself talking with a new piquancy, hinting at adventures she had never had, admirers she had never known, a life that was non-existent. She tried to make herself valuable, desirable. She became playful, indifferent. At the dance the music seemed especially fascinating. She hardly spoke to the few people she knew there, preferring to dance every dance with Rodney, letting herself lie, hardly conscious, in his arms as she danced.

At the door of her apartment, as he took her home, he put his arms around her and kissed her. Other men had kissed her, but only after much playful

fencing, long acquaintanceship. Now, she yielded to Rodney's kisses in a way she had never done. After he had left her, she lay awake most of the night and spent the rest of it, and all of Sunday morning, dreaming of him.

III

MARRIED to Rodney! That would be life! Not the slavery of her mother. Married to Rodney, life would have, constantly, a new meaning. She could coquette with life, play with life—living became suddenly sparkling, many coloured.

Before this, she had not asked for romance, she had never dreamed of even this much romance. She had just asked that she become not like her mother, a slave to a man who cared nothing for her, for whom she cared nothing. Her mother did not love her father. Other women she knew did not love their husbands. She saw that, now. They tolerated them, because they were being supported. They slaved for them because the men wanted slaves. Married to Rodney—love, a full flowering of love—

Rodney did not telephone her for two weeks. She thought of him every day, more than she had ever thought of one person—one thing—in all of her life before. Rodney—she saw his light, thick, rather rough hair, felt his cheek against hers. She thought of him every night after she had got into bed, picturing him in the dark, imagining herself kissing him and being kissed over and over again.

Then, just as she was bewilderingly accepting the fact that perhaps, after all, he did not care for her, Rodney telephoned her and asked her to go to another dance with him—no excuse, no discussion of his two weeks of silence. She accepted eagerly—and bought another new dress, a thin white one, this time. She must look charming.

The second dance was like the first. Her heart sang when she was with him. She was astonished at herself, at her emotions. She had not thought her-

self capable of such things. She sneered at her mother, even as she felt sorry for her. What did her mother—the other women she knew—know about such feelings—about men like Rodney? They had never even met men like Rodney.

For three weeks, then, Rodney took her to a dance every Saturday night. On a Wednesday he took her to the theatre. And, after each outing there were kisses in the front hall of the apartment. Finally he asked her something—but it was not to marry him.

Corinna was surprised. Then she was furious at Rodney for misunderstanding her, at herself for not being able to yield to him. She went over all of the old platitudes of respectability—what kind of a girl did he think she was?—had she led him to think, by word or action, that she would dream of such a thing—how dared he talk to her—even think of her like that?

And Rodney, with a stubborn sort of persistency went over his list of platitudes, too. After all—what harm was there? He liked her all right—would take care of her—she knew that—he would marry her if he could—surely she knew—had known from the first—that he wasn't the marrying kind. She had kissed him, hadn't she—encouraged him—led him on? Other girls. . . .

Corinna did not see Rodney any more. He never telephoned her again. She knew where she could reach him, knew where he was employed. But what was there to say to him? She was properly bound with all of the virtues of her class. Kisses were all right. Coquettries were all right. Why, she had even definitely decided to marry Rodney. Of course, her low-cut evening dresses, her little tricks—pressing against him with her bare shoulder, of kissing him, of touching his face with her fingers—these were proper as long as they were baits to matrimony. They were decent then, legitimate. But Rodney had "insulted" her. He had misunderstood her.

As time passed, she definitely decided that she had been mistaken in him, that Rodney had, from the first, been unprincipled, unworthy of her company, that he had led her on, tried to get the best of her, but that, at the first hint of his true feelings toward her, she had sent him from her in great and righteous wrath. She had had a lucky escape.

For months, then, she longed to see Rodney, but she knew what seeing him would mean. She wanted only matrimony. It was respectable, decent, the right thing—to be married. . . . But now it was unthinkable that she should even consider Rodney.

Life became dull-coloured, tinted only by the thought of what she had been through, of her escape—a fascinating, secret thing. She went to dances with the men she had known before, tried to look especially nice, in case Rodney should see her. She carried with her, though, from that time, some of the coquetry that being in love with Rodney had given her. She found that, even though it was artificial now, it added to her popularity.

IV

A YEAR later she fell in love again, a faint echo of what she had felt for Rodney. He was blond, too, but in a faded way, just as her love for him was faded. There were some visits to the theater—Fred didn't care for dancing—a few parties, his salary was small. Then she found that Fred, too, had definite ideas against matrimony—would not marry until his income was almost twice its present size.

Corinna knew the type—you go with them and go with them for years and years, and become middle-aged; finally, after everyone you know is settled, you either separate and remain single or lapse almost unconsciously into matrimony. Not if she knew herself!

Of course, she wouldn't be Fred's slave if she married him. She knew that. But—waiting years and years and then maybe his changing his mind

or his salary never growing after all—. It was not what you'd call a real opportunity. Corinna's pale love for Fred faded out altogether. She broke an engagement or two, failed to keep a telephone appointment—was surprised to see how little she missed him.

Matrimonial chances did not come in great numbers to Corinna. In fact, during the next two years she did not have a single proposal of marriage nor any chance that might have been twisted into a proposal. Men took her to the theater or to dances—she was an excellent dancer—told her their troubles, allowed her to be pleasantly entertaining. Se coquetted and flirted and giggled—talked to the girls she knew about what a wonderful time she was having and how popular she was. One at a time the other girls she knew married and went to housekeeping in little apartments. She was twenty-four. It worried her, definitely, now, not being married.

Then Arthur Slossen came to work at the woolen factory where Corinna was now employed—she had left the hardware concern several years before and took dictation now from a grandfatherly old fellow who suffered with asthma. Arthur Slossen was not handsome. Corinna had no allusions about that. He was insignificant-looking, rather retiring and had a slight accent, showing unmistakably that he was foreign-born, a stigma in the set in which Corinna moved.

But, because he was a man and new, Corinna smiled at him and coquetted. She was not surprised when he asked her, three weeks after he entered the office, to go to the theater with him. He was as unattractive as any man Corinna had ever known. He lacked, alike, all vices and virtues that would have made for interest. He was gentle, even gentlemanly. He was fairly well educated, but, outside of reading the newspapers morning and evening, he had no interest in the printed word. From his evening newspaper he cut out the sermons written by a well-known minister and read from them aloud occasionally. He

was kindly and meant well by everyone. Altogether, Corinna found him as boring as possible.

But, because he was a man and an escort, Corinna smiled at him, made eyes at him, went through her whole repertoire of tricks. Almost mechanically, she led him on, as she had tried to lead on other men before him.

One night, after she had "gone with" him for about six months, he asked her to marry him. The proposal came almost as a surprise to Corinna. Of course she had definitely played for a proposal—yet she had always played for proposals and had never received them. And here was Arthur Slossen—less of a catch than any man she had ever known—and he had asked her to marry him. To be sure there was really nothing definitely the matter with him. He was fairly nice-looking. He was a little stoop-shouldered, a little indefinite. He had a foreign accent and rather an embarrassed, humble way. But he was really quite all right. As attractive as her father must have been, or her Uncle Will. After all—a husband. . . . She could stop work in the office—she had never become a real private secretary, after all, and her bosses were always married and paid no attention to her. If she hadn't any chances until now, she wasn't likely to have any after twenty-five—twenty-five is getting on—her complexion wasn't as good as it used to be, her face was becoming broader, flatter, like her mother's.

V

CORINNA and Arthur were married in June, and Corinna's friends spoke sentimentally about "the month of brides" and gave her a kitchen shower. The couple went to housekeeping in a four-room apartment and Corinna started in to learn how to cook—she'd never paid much attention to kitchen arts before, being in school, first, and later busy all day in the office.

Corinna now had more time to notice Arthur. And when she looked at

him—and looked at the husbands of the other girls she knew—he seemed as desirable as any of them. He had a foreign accent and rounded shoulders and no sparkle or style—but what were those others? They had other faults just as glaring. But Corinna was glad that at least her generation did not become slaves of their husbands. And, as she rejoiced in this, she presently made a new discovery; she found that she actually despised Arthur. And, despising him, she watched her girl friends, talked with them, and found that all of the other young married women she knew despised their husbands, too.

She knew, too, why she despised Arthur. It was because of his meekness and his stupidity, his lack of life and excitement—because, in marrying him, he had definitely killed any chances of a romantic marriage that might, some day, have come to her. But, more than that, Corinna knew that she despised him—and that other women despised *their* husbands—*because she had been able to marry him*. All other men she had known—Rodney and Fred and the others, a man named Phillips and one named Billy Freer and Jim Henderson—they had, in one way or another, managed to escape her. They had been cleverer than she—and avoided matrimony altogether, or at least with her. It had been a duel, her wits and tricks against theirs—and they had won. Only Arthur had lost, simple Arthur, too stupid to get away. So she despised him because he had allowed himself to be caught—and to be caught by her tricks—old tricks, worn-out tricks, tricks at twenty-five, tricks that had failed to ensnare the others.

Life settled down, monotonously. Because she despised Arthur, Corinna was able to disregard him almost entirely. She would spend whole days, slovenly, in a soiled negligée, washing her face carelessly half an hour before he came home, or allowing it to remain daubed with cold cream, serving delicatessen dinners or cold meats and beans. She had no scruples about

cheating him. She was true to him because no pleasant opportunities presented themselves.

Finally, bored at staying home so much, she met men she knew downtown and had luncheon with them or went to the *matinée*. She even flirted with good-looking men on the street or in hotel lobbies and then had tea. The men were not very interesting nor were the flirtations very exciting—the most desirable men wouldn't notice her and those who did got awfully "fresh"—but it was better than nothing. What if Arthur *did* find out? What could he do? Kick her out? She'd like to see him. What if he did? She hadn't done anything actually bad. She was a married woman, had "Mrs." in front of her name. It wasn't as if she were a poor worm, like her mother had been. She was a good stenographer, could get a position any day, she knew that. Of course it was easier, spending her days in negligée reading magazines or eating candy, or downtown shopping or flirting. It was a lot better, more comfortable, than working. But, if the worst came to the worst, it wouldn't be so awfully bad if she left Arthur. It wasn't as if she couldn't get along. Poor old Arthur—he ought to be glad he had her—who was he to be considered, anyhow?

She thought of Rodney. His proposal no longer seemed insulting now. She remembered Rodney—his wonderful rough blond hair, his narrow gray eyes, his kisses. She was no longer a young girl with a necessary virtue. She was a married woman now, a woman of the world, not a silly little working girl. If she wanted a little affair. . . .

She tried to reach Rodney over the telephone. He had left that position years before. No one there knew where he was. She sent a note to him, addressed to his former home. It was returned to her. Of course, she'd meet him on the street some day. In the meantime. . . .

She spent as much money as she could on clothes, as little as possible on

the household. Arthur was pretty good about money. He was getting ahead, too. He had two raises the first year of their marriage. Wouldn't it be wonderful if, after all, he made good? She had never thought of that possibility, of his making money. He had been a pitiful little way out—a way out of working and the stigma of being unmarried. What if he became something—improved?

VI

WHEN they had been married a year and a half Arthur was promoted to assistant buyer in his department with quite a definite raise in salary. Then, suddenly, for the first time since her marriage, Corinna stopped despising him. He became almost important, someone to notice, to pay attention to. He could and did give her small luxuries far beyond those she would have been able to earn had she still been employed.

Almost unconsciously he took up more of her time. They could not afford a servant, although they were living in a more pretentious apartment—and Arthur, after a long day in the office, often came home tired, out of sorts. He needed cheering up, entertaining. His digestion was not good and he complained of "delicatessen slops," so that Corinna was forced to cook a regular dinner in the evening. She did it a bit grudgingly, but she was a little afraid of Arthur when he complained or when he quarreled with her. After all, it was his money that was used to run the house—he deserved a little something from it. . . .

A few months later Corinna's father died and her mother gave up her own small apartment and came to live with Corinna. Arthur liked his mother-in-law, in an indefinite sort of way, and agreed to the arrangement without a word. But, sometimes after that, when matters of money for the household came up, he sometimes dared to assert himself, mentioning that, after all, as long as he was paying for the running

of the household and was supporting, unaided, both Corinna and her mother, perhaps his opinions might be listened to and his desires fulfilled.

The next year Corinna's daughter was born. Corinna did not especially want a baby. Still, all of her friends were having them. . . . When she knew the baby was coming, she yielded herself deliberately to having it, spending more months than necessary in the house in negligée, ashamed to go on the street on account of her figure. She lay on the couch then, ate huge amounts of chocolates and read sentimental stories in the magazines. After the baby came she did not regain her figure, but retained some of the plumpness which characterized her mother.

There was a maid, now, an ill-trained, slow girl, but, even so, Corinna did not resume the pursuits of her early married life. There were fewer teas with men acquaintances. Perhaps because she was heavier and less entertaining, perhaps because the baby took up much of her time, perhaps because her mother and Arthur seemed to question her more, there seemed fewer chances for "fun." She associated more with women and talked babies and servants and played bridge. At the end of two years another baby came, Arthur, junior, and before another two years had passed, Corinna's third child, Archie, was born.

Corinna was definitely middle-aged, now, although she felt that she was still young and didn't look her age, nearly. She spent her time with the children mostly, for even with the help of her mother and the one maid, the children were always falling down or crying or needing attention.

There was always a lot to do. When she went downtown, it was usually, definitely, on a shopping trip, with a list of things in her purse that had to be looked after. She wore rather expensive things, a bit flashy, too full of ornament, not very carefully made, sometimes torn where one of the children had pulled, but quite "in style" as to the cut of the skirt and the colour,

Arthur did very well in business. When Beatrice, the oldest child, was twelve, he became buyer of his department. With the years, Arthur had changed a little, too. He was a nervous fellow and, when he was home, he insisted that the children be kept quiet. He was on rather a strict diet, which precluded most good things to eat and did not help his disposition. But he retained his quiet habits and his love of home and did not develop any new desires outside of his business ambitions.

VII

It was when Beatrice was thirteen that she said something which surprised Corinna.

"Mother," she said, "when I get grown up and married, you bet I'm not going to be a slave to a husband, the way you are to Dad."

"The way I am, Bee? How can you talk like that? You know your father is the kindest man. Doesn't he give you everything? He never . . ."

"He's good to us, of course," the child persisted. "It isn't that. It's just—you're sort of a slave to him. I guess all women are. You bet I won't be when I'm grown and married. You were worried all day yesterday for fear Miss Loftus would call last night, because she gets on Father's nerves."

"You know how nervous he is; mustn't be bothered. . . ."

"Oh, I know. Only it doesn't keep you from being a slave. You worry about what he eats—and if he's a little late, coming home from the office—and if company stays too late—and if the *matinée* lasts too long and he'll be home first—and about his meals and clothes."

"Nonsense," said Corinna. "You don't understand about men, dear. They like to have their meals on time, things regular. When you are grown up. . . ."

When her daughter had gone away, Corinna looked back a little at her own life, started to think about things, puzzle over things as she had done when she was younger. With the children

and all, there had been little time for introspection. She remembered what she had said to her mother, years before. She had believed—all this time—that she had followed her original plan of independence. She—a slave—to a man—as her mother had been—nonsense! Why—Arthur was no one to slave for—Arthur!

She had thought—all these years—indeinitely—that she still looked down on Arthur, did as she pleased. But she knew, finally now, that after the first year or two of matrimony she had never done that. She knew that her daughter was right, as she had been right. All she was living for was peace and quiet, a regular household, the children well, Arthur satisfied.

There had been quarrels, a few years before. But Corinna had found that Arthur hadn't greatly minded quarrelling. There were always quarrels in the office, it seemed. One quarrel more or less, in a day, hadn't mattered to him. But Corinna's day was so tasteless—children, the household—that it was Arthur's coming home that added flavour to her life. Arthur—whom she had so despised! She had wanted peace in the evenings, because evenings were the pleasantest part of the day. She knew now, as she must have recognized subconsciously then, that Arthur was the important thing in her life, that his home-comings were the big events for her.

Now she was fat and thirty-eight and already slightly wrinkled. There was nobody—nothing—she was interested in. The children—her home, of course—but outside of that. She doubted if she could take shorthand notes if she tried. She knew she could no longer operate a typewriter—older women couldn't get positions anyhow.

She thought of long days of dictation in an office, and shuddered. Arthur made a good living. There were two servants, now, and a good-sized apartment and a little place up in the country for the summer. They might even afford a small car next year. Arthur was particular, of course, a bit

cranky, even. He still cared for her, never looked at other women, she knew that. He was not very affectionate, never had been. She had been glad of that, at one time. Now she almost wished he were a bit more demonstrative. But he still spoke of their marriage as a success, of their affair as a "love match." She was glad he felt that way. After all, life was pleasant enough: little household things during the day, shopping, bridge, matinees—Arthur in the evenings. Other women envied her—her home and her children and Arthur. Why, Arthur was nicer than most husbands. She went over in her mind all of the women she knew—all the same—as they had been when she was a little girl—all struggling, working to please the man—the man—

Corinna remembered how strongly she had felt against this when she was a little girl. She knew how her daughter was beginning to feel now. It wasn't fair, of course. It didn't seem right—that the man should always come first, that his wishes should come first—that she should spend hours—her days—her life—planning for him, doing things for him—always the man—the man.

Yet Corinna thought of the women

she knew who had never married—fearing each day that they'd be too old to be allowed to keep on working—discontented, lonely. She knew that women like herself who had accepted matrimony—or who had searched for and found matrimony—were slaves. It wasn't fair. But life wasn't fair to women. You couldn't get out of it—do anything about it. If you weren't married—and didn't have money—you were lonely, worked hard—had a difficult time of it. If you were married—Corinna knew people only in her own class—you were a slave—as much of a slave as if you had lived hundreds of years ago. Life was not beautiful nor romantic nor lovely. She did not love Arthur—yet, she certainly did not despise him—she really admired him a good deal—getting ahead without pull or anything like that. He worked hard—didn't get much out of life, either, deserved peace and quiet, things the way he wanted them at home. Life was funny, not especially interesting—children—little things. . . . She was a slave, of course—still, life was better than it might be—someone to look forward to seeing in the evenings—to worry about pleasing—to do things for—a man.



Leaves

By Luis Muñoz Marin

WE shall forget our words,
 We shall forget our hearts,
 And in forgetting these, we forget all
 For we have words, then hearts, then . . . nothing more.

But these trees, my love, that have heard us,
 These trees that are good and trusting and deep
 With the eternal spirit of the earth,
 Shall they forget?
 I dread the reproach of their everlasting leaves.

The Legend of Margaret

By *Helen Woljeska*

THEN her proud rival kept her in close confinement in the little tower room, and all the days of her life now passed in utter solitude.

But in those times beasts and things still conversed with humans—a practice which they have long since given up. Thus, solitude became full of subtle comradeship for her. The wide, curtained bed invited her to sleep within its perfumed depths, the carved chest kept faithful watch over her fine linens and silks, the spinning-wheel was ever ready to help pass the time, and the quaint lute to sing to her. From the deep window seat she could look far across the land and up into the sky's mysterious depths; the wild clouds were her friends, and the birds her playfellows. And a bejewelled book carried her fancies to far-away lands and times.

What else could she want?

Although no human being ever approached her, except the silent servant who once a day came to attend to her wants, she finally succeeded in being peacefully and perfectly happy. All wild bliss and misery were forgotten. She no longer yearned for freedom and love. And so the years passed, swiftly, softly, without leaving marks on the flowerlike beauty of her lovely, peaceful face.

The years passed. Ten of them. Then the proud Fredegunde died. And Margaret's lover learned that his long-mourned sweetheart still lived! Then

he swore and blasphemed and prayed with a mighty voice, and finally, taking the silent servant rudely by the shoulder, bade her lead him at once to the tower room.

Margaret stood by her window. The swallows twittered about her. And the May morning enveloped her in its delicate golden radiance. She was part of the perfumed peace of spring.

Suddenly loud footsteps approached her silent and secret door. With a great crash it opened. And a man broke uncouthly upon her golden solitude. Brown and big he stood there, awkward as a bear, and his voice sounded crude and wild. Frightened, the swallows whirled away. And Margaret, aghast, raised imploring hands to heaven. But her lover, mad with joy on seeing her more beautiful than ever, rushed upon her, seized her with big, hard arms, and crushed her to his breast.

"Margaret—Margaret—do you still know me—do you still love me—?" he cried, while, in spite of her tears and pleadings, he kissed her again and again.

Finally Margaret stopped sobbing. She looked at him long, earnestly, questioningly. Then she said: "Why is it that a woman would rather be unhappy with a man than happy alone?"

And her lover laughed his coarsely happy, loud laugh. Evidently he considered her question a pleasing answer to his own.



La Belle Hobbs

By John Chapin Mosher

INFINITE nonsense has been written about her ever since her success in Paris, and since that Bourbon marquis shot himself on her doorstep. Of course the most outrageous scandals have been prevalent until the moralists cannot conceive the hardihood with which she still smiles across the footlights and in innumerable photographs.

Romance must be the common fare of such a woman. It is quaint of her, and doubtless good advertising to choose the quaint sobriquet of Hobbs. It means of course that her real name is Castiglione, or even de Vere. In the stage-world people lie on principle. Hence you will not believe this story, even with its touch of sentiment, but you will read it because it is about Helen Hobbs, and you will go again to see her dance, and shudder and quake at the idea of what must have been the real life of such a woman.

I

SHE was born in that upstate New York town of Ovid which is like every other town in that part of the country, with orchards and some fancy gardening, proud of its Civil War veterans and its prize pumpkins. Her family named her Helen, not after the Trojan lady who burned the topless towers, but after Aunt Helen Saxby, who might thus be cajoled into leaving the girl her money. The beauty that launched a thousand ships did not run in that family. It was not to be expected, nor was it desired. But there was a good chance for the money.

It was one of those neat twists that

the fates enjoy. The money was to be left to another branch of the family who were not, it was announced, such "characters" as Helen's own; and from some forgotten source, the unforeseen beauty fell to the girl's lot.

But long before the beauty showed itself, while her hair hung in strings about her long pale face, another thing was to prove just as valuable to her career and was spreading stories about her throughout the town. Mrs. Johnson, the boarding-house keeper, where the Hobbses sometimes took their meals, found her once sitting on the back steps with the big cat in her arms. The cat didn't like it, and there was a little stream of blood where his claws had dug into her. Mrs. Johnson heard Helen murmuring to herself:

"It hurts like anything, but I'm not goin' to let you go till I'm a ready to!"

If she looked like a nervous jackdaw in her own clothes, nobody else at least might flaunt their finery long before her. She was a great believer in taking the wind out of people's sails, and very expert in the art. When Mamie Roberts in a new shirt-waist and skirt descended from the teacher's platform, conscious of the envious gaze of the whole school, it was Helen's shrill whisper that spread abroad the one delicate feature of Mamie's purple and fine linen:

"I could see her flannel panties."

Later her tongue grew sharper. She needed it for defense too often. Others than her Aunt Helen began to refer to the family as "characters." Pa Hobbs, when Helen was about fifteen, lost heavily in investments that only a particularly gullible man would have con-

sidered. He tried to counterbalance this reflection on his intelligence by a vaunted superiority in other lines. He accused the townspeople of being numskulls before they could call him a fool. He attacked their manner of living with a fusillade of scientific terms and a barrage of efficiency maxims, and offended reputable ladies with a reference to their protoplasms.

Of course he never ate meat, and was literally kicked out of Jim Sales's store for declaiming that man should live on roots and berries, in tablet form. Such vehemence and such indifference to logic must have found him adherents had he only survived his own enthusiasm. At least he perished in the practice of his creed, a cramp seizing him in the November plunge that he advocated for everybody. The town knew that it was "bound to happen."

It was hard for Mrs. Hobbs. But she had her own "bug." Art was her's. She had an idea that the way to cope with this mansard-roofed civilization was to wind a Greek fillet around her head and in a crisis appeal to the patronage of one Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Mrs. Johnson, to whose house Mrs. Hobbs and her daughter now moved, bore the brunt of this development. Art permeated her house like the Tuesday cabbage dinner. It might be only a lily in the umbrella stand or tulpe tied around the banisters, but she never came out of her kitchen to climb the carpeted, brass-rodded stairs, that she did not find some new outbreak. It got on her nerves. It began to haunt her. But she was a philosopher and when by some weird coincidence years later she was brought in touch with the Bakst treatment of colour, she could only throw up her hands with "It's a mercy I was spared that."

With such a family it was only to be expected that Helen do something a little out of the ordinary. It was a great relief to every mother in the county when they found she was not to be such a dangerous belle as her looks threatened to make her. The young gentlemen of the town preferred

clinging and admiring young ladies. Helen never clung, and she admired very little, never their new neckties, their dogs, nor their coats of tan. And she was only sixteen when she announced to the world, or whatever part was interested in hearing it, that she was going on the stage.

"Of course I am," she would say, "look at me dance."

And she would spin and pirouette for a gaping roomful of farm hands and shop keepers.

"You don't think that a girl who can dance like that," she would demand of them, "will ever take in sewing or marry Jim Sales, do you?"

It was plain to the eyes of the whole town that it was time someone took that girl in charge. All the mothers would do it, if they didn't have their own progeny on hand; and the unmarried ladies had their committees, and their papers for the Louisa M. Alcott Club. And it appeared that Helen must be left to her own devices and the pre-raphaelite ethics of her mother, when an angel appeared in the guise of a school-teacher—quite in the manner of the novels the Louisa M. Alcott Club was brought up on.

Jane Gifford had ten years behind her of unscrupulous addition, subtraction and long division. She betrayed no enthusiasm in anything during these years except what A did to B, and X to Y, and was only under the slightest suspicions that she held the binominal theorem to be more important than the Ten Commandments.

Her interest in Helen was highly commended. What patience she showed with the child; what a spirit of devotion! Helen's last year in school established her as one almost torn from the mire by her teacher's sense of consecration to the individual. Quite a fever of virtuous enthusiasm was worked up about her "case." Then on the last day of school Miss Gifford announced that she had accepted a position to teach in New York. And it became known almost at once that she had invited Helen to come and live

with her . . . Miss Gifford was not urged to read her paper on the heroines of Cooper to the Louisa M. Alcott Club. Mrs. Roberts said she knew now where Helen got her ideas

That last summer would have been thoroughly miserable for Helen, a lonely and harassed prologue to her life in New York, if she had not had her dancing class. The cousins that Aunt Helen had favoured as being more normal persons, perhaps with some sense of recompense invited Helen to join the class they were having twice a week during July. It was only for the modern dances, they explained, with some idea that Helen only approved of Isadora and Pavlowa. But she was delighted. She had never danced except at the town affairs, and had never had any instruction whatsoever.

The young Mr. Morgen, who conducted the class, under strict chaperonage of course, had ingratiated himself with the Rochesterians who boasted of metropolitan manners. His antecedents were a mystery. It was rumoured, and never deliberately denied, that he was connected with the millionaire family. Otherwise it was only known that he had been on the stage, in the bond business, had studied for the church till his views made him give it up, had taught literature in a middle western university, and had led a life of elegant seclusion in Pomfret, Conn.

At all events his hair had a wave, like the back of a Belter chair, his manicure was always crystalline, and he knew every step and dip that was torturing the ankles and arches of the most modish dowagers. In August he was to dance at a Saratoga hotel during the racing season.

With a social sense as delicate as the ear of a musician, Mr. Morgen had no time for a country cousin. But Helen soon found that this young man liked to dance with her. She was quick to see that, when his smooth, massaged face showed the fagged lines it sometimes did at the end of a lesson, he would turn to her, and they would one-step until his lightness came back to him.

He seemed to her the first partner she had ever known who knew the meaning of rhythm.

It was after such a dance that he once said to her:

"You'd go in the profession with our dancing."

She had never told him her plan, but she answered then at once:

"I'm going to New York to try, this fall."

He lighted up.

"It's the life," he whispered, "Broadway—I never get far from it. And you'll *take*. You've got the style. You need trimming, but I can tell."

Helen noticed that a sort of bond seemed established between them after this, a bond that might be expected to arise from some rare mutual experience, dividing them from the rest of the world. It was her first contact with the great confraternity of the footlights, of those who amuse to live, of the world that survives on a parody, where a career is made with a strip of chiffon and where a contortion makes a fortune.

But with Helen, also, Mr. Morgen maintained the mystery of his past. Once or twice she thought he would tell her, but he only bit his lips, stumbled a moment and hurried on to some anecdote of the admirable qualities of his particular acquaintance, until all New York appeared a nest of altruism.

"Generous!" Mr. Morgen would cry, "why, my dear, that man let that boy wear his diamond ring to get a job with!"

So buoyant was her assurance, so near her flight from Ovid, that she was affable even to the people in town during that last month. And their anger now turned on Miss Gifford. They had for Helen a certain tolerant goodwill. She even had a flirtation with a traveling man who named his suspenders after her, and another with a young man of artistic bent who reminded her of Morgen, named Nash, who said that pink gave him a nausea. Other boys, too, crowded around Mrs. Johnson's front porch, and Mamie Roberts imi-

tated the way Helen did her hair. But when Miss Gifford wrote that the apartment was ready, Helen vanished from town with the most perfunctory farewells.

"Her art has claimed her," was Mrs. Hobbs's only illumination on the subject. It was about this time that she began to be held "a bit touched in the head," a reputation she held until her daughter's success lifted her to eminence and a place of authority in the Louisa M. Alcott Club, where her pre-raphaelite tendencies flourished with respected abandon.

II

As for Helen, she rose from the debris of her dreams of New York, with as definite a purpose as she had visioned in the imagined city. It was a far more real thing to her than these trestles and skyscrapers, these elbows and staccatos. It was as graspable a thing as a trapeze is to an acrobat who, missing the rope he leaped for, is lucky enough to find another. His dizziness too as he swings above the blare of bands, the white stripe of faces, the tumult of the rings, was hers those first days in New York. But she never lost hold. A few people in this rabble could dance, and a few others could show her the way to the goal she wanted. The rest of the world did not count.

It was all in keeping with the single-track character of her interest to scrape up an acquaintance with Roderick Wright. Or rather admit him to her acquaintance which until his entrée had included only Miss Gifford. He passed them the salt and the sugar and the pepper at the Violet Vat, in Greenwich Village, where they were having fried eggs and coffee on mauve china, and then asked Helen if he might draw her. She said he might not. Whereat he showed her the sketch of the profile he had already made—done while she was eating her cabbage soup.

Helen felt the pressure of Ovid convention to turn her back on him, but she liked the sketch and remembered

this was Bohemia where one must expect such liberties. She must remember that dancing was an art, too, and must not be too harsh on the breed.

"You've got lines," the young man continued. "I noticed you when you came in. It's too bad you wear sport clothes. You're not that type at all."

Here Miss Gifford took a hand in the situation.

She leaned forward and very deliberately gave him the look she generally reserved for young people who copied other people's answers to how many feet were in three miles, seven yards and three inches.

The young man was not abashed. He returned her stare casually. Evidently she had not "lines" and therefor did not concern him. Miss Gifford could at least express her disapproval by a departure and she hustled Helen out.

"We should never go to such places. I've felt that from the beginning," she almost stormed. The young man's composure had disconcerted her.

"Well, we'll never have to go there again," replied Helen, which was a comfortable truth to reassure Miss Gifford.

And therefore Helen went there alone the very next day, and had a long discussion on sport clothes and lines with Roderick Wright. She had never met anyone like him. He was entirely different from Mr. Morgan, or from Mr. Nash who was so sensitive to pink, or certainly from anyone else who had ever ventured to Ovid to mow hay, or to sell suspenders. His hands she noticed at once. They looked as though they were made of tissue paper—only strong underneath.

"He knows all about the theater," she said to herself after the second meeting.

It had made her impatient to feel she was giving any time to an interest not in this line.

She found herself, too, more right on this score than she had expected. Roderick made an almost substantial income for his phase of existence, drawing black and whites for the fash-

ion and decorative arts magazines, designing costumes for fancy dress balls, and occasionally a set for a new cabaret. He was a mechanic of the vanities. A ball meant to him what a cold wave does to a coal-dealer. He was an artisan of the harlequinade, and a serious worker. Tissue paper, but steel underneath.

And this steel element, so strangely contrasted, fascinated Helen. He was as relentless as steel, and supple as steel. His eyes, when they turned from the paper he was working on, bored through the sham about him like gimlets. His trade was a thing of curves and shadows, but he had been trained in the school of "pay-me-first." Through him she got her first job.

It was in a pageant of a big Hallowe'en ball at Webster Hall. She appeared as a maenad with grape leaves in her hair, and scored a success. A cartoonist she had heard of even in Ovid wanted to dance with her. It was as though a prince of the blood had noticed her. And she received three other engagements to appear, at a studio ball as Astarte, at a private affair uptown as Maud Muller, and at the "Colyumists' Ball" next month as a Sunday Supplement. She had no idea how to interpret all these titles, but Roderick—always beside her—nudged her to accept them all.

"Will I get paid?" she asked, wonderingly.

"One never knows," Roderick answered grimly. "You can't count on that at first. But it's good publicity."

One boy dressed as a French sailor proposed to her. He was slightly drunk and very eloquent about the little home she would have as the mother of his children. He had just come to New York to get a job. Acceptances were so much in the air that Helen felt she was breaking a rule of etiquette to refuse him. She told this to Roderick and was puzzled and a little hurt that he only laughed at the affair.

She received twenty-five dollars for her part in the program of the Hallowe'en Ball. It was the beginning of her

professional career—her début. She fulfilled all the engagements she received that evening, and felt them successful since they led to others.

She learned one point from them. Both the studio and the columnists paid her, but the fashionable up-town affair was very considerate in seeing that she had a dish of ice-cream and two *petits fours*—like everybody else—and graciously made her keep her Maud Muller costume. She was resentful, but Roderick took it so much as a matter of course that she laughed, and put down to her account for that month's earnings \$50 and one sunbonnet.

Through his acquaintance with art editors, Roderick next got her a chance to pose in a series of fashion pictures that enabled her to send dazzling series of photographs to Ovid, representing her life in New York in a setting of ermine and crêpe velvet. Actually the pictures were so profitable that she was able to consider having something more than a milk-shake for lunch.

She made no money to speak of, but with a spindly allowance from home she was able to scrape along as well as most of the people she met. She was too interested to be discouraged. She could hardly expect to make more definite progress; she had escaped Ovid, and she was learning her trade. And also, while never losing the keen edge of her determination, she was developing an affection for the rattle-taggle, hit-and-miss existence of this half of the world. With Roderick for a laconic interpreter, she began to comprehend the crazy patch-work of this caravan-serie. She grew used to people who gave up meals for silk lingerie, to old men who waxed bitter on the subject of cretonnes, to a whole society with no more than a week's capital ahead.

III

SHE grew to admire rather than to be startled by a friend of Roderick's, Mrs. Caleb Westminster, who kept a shop for antiques in Madison Avenue. Mrs. Westminster invited her to spend

a week-end at her cottage in Harmon. It was a modish little affair "done over" in a rather liberal mid-victorianism, with more silk tassels than plumbing. She was a blithe wasp of a woman, with the poise of a buccaneer, and the wit of a curb-broker. Did she not do business with the very rich?

Just as Helen arrived Mrs. Westminster was called to the telephone.

"Pay my bill this week?" Helen heard her say. "Why, I expect to pay it this week, of course. But I can't promise. And I don't want to promise," her voice throbbled with an angelic righteousness "and then have to break it." Then, with a new, sharper note, "Since you've called me I feel it my duty to tell you that several times lately the milk has been sour.—Oh, no, I haven't complained. I know this is an out-of-the-way place, and the hill is steep. I appreciate all that. But of course if the milk keeps on being sour I'll have to try someone else. I told some of my friends—who spoke about your milk—that I was sure it wasn't your fault.—Yes, I'll overlook it this time."

And she came rustling back to Helen, with triumph agleam in her eyes.

"It's that big milk company," she elucidated, "I'd never hold up on a small private business. But they can afford to wait a week or two, or—(she shrugged her shoulders humorously)—a month or two for that matter."

Mrs. Westminster had another guest this week-end, a large woman, Belle Donlon, who appeared to be one who might be the life and soul of a Sunday school picnic, but who was in reality a private detective in a big department store. At dinner Belle regaled them with anecdotes of her profession. Only yesterday she had discovered a clergyman stuffing silk stockings up his waistcoat.

She had had a short run in the chorus herself, in her youth, and she was interested in Helen.

"I can't help thinking you'll get on, dearie," she exclaimed during the salad, "I can tell you're the type. But there's

nothing in the whole game if you don't land it across with one of the high muck-a-mucks. There's not so much difference between us who's left the chorus, for the good of the community, lookin' at it both ways, and those who gets their clothes given to 'em free, so long as they'll wear 'em. It's just that they happened to get seen. Someway or other you have got to get looked at in the rush."

Mrs. Westminster, who had great confidence in Belle's eye, was impressed enough by her interest in Helen to offer to speak to a managerial acquaintance who was beginning rehearsals for a summer show.

Belle Donlon seized on the idea before Helen could answer.

"Einstein's the bird," she declared.

She too would speak to Einstein, who was also an old friend of hers. Everybody was either an old friend to Miss Donlon or a crook after the notions. Helen had not yet been on the legitimate stage and "Miss Pekinese" would be an excellent experiment. Early the next afternoon she left Harmon to meet Roderick at the Violet Vat and get his opinion.

To her surprise Roderick was nowhere to be seen. She ate the bowl of potato soup, and as she had a three-course midday dinner that day, and it would be extravagant to eat more now, she decided to call at once at his studio.

She often met him at his studio, a curious impersonal sort of place that any number of people trailed through at all hours except when Roderick locked himself in to work. It had been a basement kitchen of a private house, which, however, when the rest of the house was made over into apartments had been transformed into a separate and complete establishment. The black stove still remained, but the walls had been painted a dull orange and the woodwork a pale green.

Finding the door locked Helen was sure Roderick was inside, and she rapped boldly a second time, and then called impatiently:

"Roddy, let me in."

Roderick threw the door open, and closed it after her.

"Why didn't you meet me for supper?"

"I didn't want any."

She looked about the room. It was in its usual disorder of half-finished sketches, of covers and illustrations torn from magazines, of fragments of silk and brocade. Helen always felt like a morsel from a scrap bag in that room, a bit of hat trimming. One might run a pin through her and wear her to the matinée.

It was nothing unusual for Roderick to omit a meal under the stress of a pressing order, or in the enthusiasm of a new design.

"Did Carter give you another order?" —Carter was the editor who had used her for his fashion pictures.

"He turned down the others," replied Roderick without accent.

"Turned them down?" Helen was aghast, "Why you worked on those two weeks. They were lovely."

"He wouldn't give me what I asked. They're paying de Costa twice as much as they do me. And look at the smudges he hands them."

The rejected drawings lay on the table and Helen turned them over. The feather-fine lines, the suggestive modern shading seemed beautiful to her. In her eyes he was all genius. This order had been a big one. Roderick was low in funds, and had worked on these, as he sometimes did work, until his nerves were drawn taut with the concentration and the coffee and the lack of sleep.

It was inconceivable to her that this steel guide of hers should ever break down, but suddenly she saw that he was almost ready to. He snatched the sketches from her, and would have torn them in pieces had she not rescued them.

"Don't, don't, Roddy!" she screamed.

"They're rotten enough," he cried, and then in abandonment to the despair he felt he threw himself on the couch.

"I'm all in," he moaned. Then, "I didn't mean to let myself go."

She stood beside him a moment. Then, suddenly—something she had never dreamt of doing before—she sank on her knees beside him and stroked his forehead.

"Don't bother—they are lovely," she murmured over him.

Then she rose with the wisest inspiration of the moment.

"We'll go to the pastry shop and get some supper."

She persuaded him to pull himself together, and she was conscious of concealing an air of victory when she finally got him out and led him down the street. And as the long slim figures of this couple, the dancer and the artist, strode to their supper of cocoa and crullers, the dancer felt herself a new responsibility that brought with it a most terrifying maturity.

Not that Roderick lost his prestige as the ultimate oracle of her destiny. He decided that "Miss Pekinese" would at least be experience. And since there would be no more costume balls this season, and Carter would not be likely now to oblige them with more posings, she could afford to experiment with a play that, Roderick assured her, was a certain failure.

Helen, therefore, sought out Belle Donlon in the department store and while that guardian of public morality eyed an overblonde widow fingering the taffetas, told her that she wanted nothing better than a chance with "Miss Pekinese."

Evidently the worthy Belle had not overestimated her influence with Mr. Einstein. He accepted Helen without preliminaries and with an almost gallant flexibility placed her in the chorus.

It was the most unrelenting, the most exhausting work she had ever imagined. Sheer drudgery! With a dozen other girls she paraded back and forth for hours at a time, singing over and over again:

*"Little Miss Pekinese,
I'd crawl on my knees,
Across the seas,
To little Miss Pekinese."*

The first rehearsals were held in an empty loft of a storage building, and when the girls were too fatigued to do more, they were allowed to rest on camp stools scattered about the back of the room, while the principals bulldozed their way through the big scenes. There was no real rest, though, for them in this, for they must keep every nerve alert for the first signal from the director to repeat their act. And while they waited they could hear a vaudeville team rehearsing on the floor below. In her sleep the poor, flogged humour pranced through Helen's brain:

"Why does a lamp chimney smoke?"

"Because it can't chew."

And the high scream that followed every repetition:

"Make 'em think it's funny!"

Helen was too used up after a day of such torture to make friends with any of the company. But with real tact she avoided making any enemies, which was remarkable since the director showed an inclination to bring her to the front. During these weeks of rehearsal her only solace was an occasional supper with Roderick at the Violet Vat.

It was impossible for Helen with her lack of experience on the stage to form any estimate of the value of the show. But she had thought they were far from being ready when Mr. Einstein announced the opening try-out performance at Poughkeepsie. Gossip explained that Mr. Einstein had the offer of the particular theater he wanted at an especially low price, and was staking all on a gamble that there might be something in the old truck anyway. The Nestors of the chorus predicted without hesitation a speedy and painless death.

IV

It was, as it turned out, as speedy and painless as death could be no place but on the stage. For three weeks of rehearsal and one week's actual presentation, Helen drew her one week's pay and left behind even the spirit of "Miss Pekinese," too fragile a lady even

for obsequies, a slighted beauty in spite of those who vowed to crawl on their knees across the seas to do her homage.

Indeed her dissolution was ghoulishly matter of fact. A glum Poughkeepsie, all in tone with the atmosphere of the hotel bed rooms vouchsafed the lovely ladies of the chorus. A first night in New York, a scalding July first night, with office boys in the critics' seats, a curtain that stuck, and a heat that made the grease-paint drip.

Helen was not at all depressed by the failure of the play. Miss Gifford assured her that she was exquisite—the only one on the stage. Roderick, without *blague*, vowed she "showed off." Mrs. Westminster and Belle Donlon both sent her notes, one accrediting her with "personality" and the other with "presence" which, being pleasant qualities to possess, consoled her somewhat for so much arduous toil for so little actual cash.

"Just wait till some one sees you," Belle Donlon assured her, "then they'll name a corset after you quick enough."

But Helen found that she was a long way from being seen yet.

Though "Miss Pekinese" had not discouraged her—the opposite if anything—the weeks that followed went a long way toward doing so. She was determined now to dance only on the stage, to waste no more time on costume balls and pageants. And sometimes during these weeks she did think she might just as well have remained in Ovid. Several times a day she was informed that she hadn't enough experience, that she was too tall, too dark, that they wanted a red-headed girl, and often told nothing but to get out.

She devised the most astonishing history of herself, which she told so many times that she almost forgot the facts of her own life. She had danced in Paris and Petrograd, and been the life and soul of a Missouri musical comedy. She had played Ophelia in Seattle, and been compared to Gaby in New Mexico.

But all this romancing failed to land an engagement. She even considered a vaudeville act that would break the first

and fundamental rule she had learned by taking her away from New York, on the road. Her partner, though, was an inch shorter than she. It was inexcusable. He couldn't "one-step with a totem pole"; she heard him wail. "Little runt," she flung back at him in the manner of her old school days, and she stamped out of the office.

Roderick was very important these days. Whenever she felt like hopping into the river, she would go instead to call on Roderick and tidy up his place a bit for him. Roderick of course could never draw when the chairs were being turned upside down, and he was generally driven to some desperate measure such as reading poetry.

Helen found poetry a great help in her cleaning. There were some verses that reminded her of the life she saw about her: "oh, charm of rouge on fragile cheek." And she was inspired to polish the stove by the cadence of:

*"Oh, bitterness of things too sweet,
Oh, broken singing of the dove,
Love's wings are overfleet,
And like the panther's feet,
The feet of love."*

Some Sunday afternoons Roderick gave teas for a motley crew from their world: Mrs. Westminster, brilliant in the evasion of her bills; Belle Donlon, with new tales of what humanity will do for a bit of lace, the young sailor of Helen's first ball, now too sophisticated on \$24 a week to propose to anybody; even de Costa who was suspected of imitating Roderick's pen and inks, and once or twice the great Carter himself, who cut rather a sad figure in private life and was given to pondering on such philosophical problems as why men on crutches always go to buffet lunches.

Once Helen hung up all of Roderick's drawings, and they had an exhibition, and Roderick allowed himself to be acclaimed a coming young man by ten people, a real artist by six, a genius by two, and got three orders out of it. He was, of course, very nonchalant about it. But after all his guests but

Helen had gone, he found in himself the most unexpected ability to play the banjo that someone had left behind, and sang a song, which is just as conceivable a bit of natural history as Mr. Swinburne's treatise on the panther's feet:

*"Glow, little glow-worm,
Glimmer, glimmer,
Lead us lest too far we wander,
Love's own light is shining yonder—
Glow, little glow-worm,
Glimmer, glimmer."*

And he wasn't prompted to sing the words, be it noted, till Helen declared that the picture he had drawn of Night was altogether too exquisite to be buried in the folio, and must face the world from the point of honour over the stove. And Roderick bent over her fingers in the old gallant style, and vowed that every lovely line in the figure of this lady of Night, she had given him. Which was a proper answer, for the lady in the picture represented no sombre night, no night of the wilderness, but a very modern, civilized night, a night of slippers with rosettes, a coiffured night, a night with a beauty patch—and all the stars were in the mesh of her train.

There was something especially catching too in a solitary flower arranged in space where it might just balance the rosette on the pointed slipper in the opposite corner. It was a conventionalized blossom, of course. It might be a dahlia or a daisy or an Egyptian lotus that Night had flung from her tapering fingers with all their rings. Its four preposterous petals gave a "note" to the whole picture. It was such a triumphant bit of fauna, asserting itself with such bravado, as though it had nothing but jeers for this splendid damsel who would have nothing of it.

Then Helen pinned at her bosom three of the rich red roses they had dared to deck the green and orange room with—it was a mistake but was considered quite an effect—and she and

Roderick went for their cocoa and crul-
lers at the pastry shop. And afterwards,
because the night invited, they took a
ramble which had a very important
bearing upon their careers.

As the streets of pleasure were to
these two the real business streets, it
was only natural that they should seek
now other parts of the city. And they
walked down long silent blocks of ware-
houses, where there is always an un-
heeded tinkling of burglar alarms, as
if, at that moment, all about, thieves
were stuffing their pockets.

In so short a time it was almost rec-
ord speed—so quickly did their long
strides carry them over the ground—
they found themselves in that district
which is, at night, as beautiful and
mystical as, in the daytime, its towers
and roofs appear to a newcomer in the
harbour. Here a night watchman saw
them steal within the portico of a great
bank, and he tiptoed about to see what
business was in the offing now. Then
just as stealthily he crept away, and
was in a good humour for the rest of
the night. And the scrubwoman at
dawn found red rose petals on the
stone steps, and crossed herself lest it
be St. Cecilia had loitered there.

The dancer told the artist that night
under the portico that she would
marry him. It was all very idyllic, and
must have hallowed forever with ro-
mance Wall Street, Rector Street,
Lower Broadway and the Battery.

But when Helen awoke next day she
rose with the bitter decision that she
could never marry Roderick while she
was one of the army of the unemployed.
She could never permit herself to be
a burden on the shoulders of genius.
How could Roderick—how could any
man—give his full power to putting
rosettes on the slippers of a conspicu-
ously fastidious night, and of creating
those ladies with one line and a dot in
their faces, if he had a wife who could-
n't even get a job in the chorus?

When Roderick saw her mind was
made up on that matter he did his best
to help her, but with his first suggestion
made a very bad start.

"Have you tried Dreifeldt?"

Which might have been a taunt as
well as advice, and Helen told him so.

"Dreifeldt?" she cried, "Dreifeldt! I
might as well go to the King of Eng-
land, I might as well dance for Congress
while they're rowing over their silly
bills. I might as well go to the White
House and order the President to
watch me dance. I think you're out of
your head! I think you're quite mad.
I should have guessed it when you
asked me to marry you."

And she stormed out, leaving Rod-
erick quite unable to work for the rest
of the day, though he was well started
on a Pierrot showing off something
new in cigarette cases. And Helen
vowed then and there that she wouldn't
go near Roderick again until she had
really got something.

V

BELLE DONLON was a great consoia-
tion during the next weeks when Helen
had deprived herself of Roderick.

"You've got grit," she told her.
"You'll land! Luck's bound to change,
and someone will get a slant on you."

And luck did change, the way luck
does, on the very last day, at the most
dismal and hopeless moment.

The impossible happened on a cold,
rainy November morning. Helen stood
on an upper Park Avenue corner wait-
ing for a car that was not stuffed to the
doors with people. And in every one
of her significant lines she was looking
as all women look when they are think-
ing that they might just as well marry
Jim Sales and be done with it.

Miss Gifford had forced her to go to
a spiritualistic seance the night before,
which had been drearily without a
phantom, except for one wraith of a
practical turn who had spirited off her
umbrella. And naturally after such an
episode it was drizzling, and threaten-
ing to settle down into a steady shower.
Helen had just reached that frame of
mind when if the old woman who asked
her way to the elevated station had add-
ed succinctly: "My dear, I am your

fairy god-mother, and your reply is so courteous you may have anything you wish," she would have demanded only an umbrella.

Thus she may be excused for staring earnestly at a young man strolling up the street with an especially luxurious breadth of shelter.

And then, the first turn of luck, the young man was not one she had vowed never to speak to again, nor one who knows that woman must be dodged at all costs, but none other than Mr. Morgen of the dancing class.

"You don't know me?" she cried out to him, with a laugh no man would dream of dodging.

"Helen Hobbs," he sang out, "I was just thinking about you."

Of course Mr. Morgen was doing something as agreeable as that. Helen felt, as she fell into stride with him, that she had never appreciated him in Rochester. His enthusiasm was unabated. She noticed his skilful side glances take in the detail of her frock, and his voice bespoke a new respect.

They sought refuge from the elements in a tea-shop that also proffered breakfast, and over coffee and toast, Helen's true spirit returned. Mr. Morgen grew eloquent. He had just come through a great ordeal, had had to bear more than his share of the human lot of suffering. He had been dancing a whole season at a Chicago hotel.

"It took nerve, but I got good money. It was the swellest hotel. And they was glad enough to get a real first class New York dancer. But it's a risk. You might die out there."

He was the same Mr. Morgen, but she saw that she was not the same Helen Hobbs to him. She might almost be admitted to an equality of position. Not a wave in her hair, not a fold of her skirt missed his shrewd scrutiny, and no modiste had a surer eye. And she was approved. There was no doubt of the sincere intonation in the eloquent words: "How well you done yourself?"

Under the warming spell of the coffee and his easy camaraderie Helen

sketched the history of her life in New York, dealing very frankly, except for Roderick's part in it, with her present predicament.

"I can't go on forever," she said, "in costume balls and fashion pictures, and never get any further. You know that's so."

Mr. Morgen could give her that only sympathy that is ever welcome; the sympathy of one who has been often in the same place.

He grew very grave over her problem. Helen suspected that he felt a certain responsibility for her welfare. Had he not encouraged her to leave Ovid?

"I haven't told you everything about myself," he began after a moment.

It was perfectly obvious that Mr. Morgen never told everything about himself to anyone, and now Helen wanted to talk about her own life, not his. But she hid her impatience. This mystery about Mr. Morgen's antecedents had always bored her. Since coming to New York she had grown convinced that he was only the product of the last row of the grand finale. But Mr. Morgen evidently expected to surprise her.

"Dreifeldt," he said—and she almost left him, she was so tired of this name which meant all that was unattainable, "Dreifeldt, the manager, you know—well, he once done my father out of a big business,—he's crooked as they make 'em; and then he married my father's sister, so he sort of owes something to the family. Tries to make up for the dirt he played in his life. He got me this job in Chicago, and I'm in high now with the old fellow. Thinks I showed lots of character in sticking the way I did. And he's right."

Helen was drawing on her gloves long before he had finished this speech.

"Really," she said, and she smiled at him in a way she never had dreamt of smiling when he had known her in Rochester, "that's your little secret. He must be a help to you. Now tell me," and she leaned earnestly across the table, "do you think I ought to give up

musical comedy for Shakespeare? I have had this offer to do Juliet—"

"Don't!" Mr. Morgen was emphatic. "It's a duty for girls like you to stand by the musical shows. Anybody can do Shakespeare—oh, I don't mean that, but the real class go into the musical, and you know it."

He tapped her arm authoritatively.

Helen shrugged her shoulders, and looked into space past the preserve jars in the window to the bleak heaven beyond.

She did not stir when Mr. Morgen rushed eagerly on, "Now you go and see Dreifeldt. Here's my card. Don't you go and give your life up to Shakespeare."

Helen found strength enough to take the card, and murmuring that she would try to drop in on his uncle and wouldn't decide on the Juliet proposition too impulsively, she left him so hurriedly at the door of the tea-shop that she even forgot to escort him under his umbrella to the subway.

VI

HELEN had fought to the death with so many managers that she never dreamt that she would ever be afraid of one again. But when she found that Mr. Morgen's card actually did clear the way for her to the Dreifeldt sanctuary, she could not forget that on this interview her success depended. It was too rare a chance ever to come a second time. And thus it came about that the first glimpse Mr. Dreifeldt had of this girl his nuisance of a nephew was plaguing him with brought to his mind his favorite axiom:

"Them as ain't sure of themselves, I'm sure ain't no good."

It was indeed with a timidity that had more of the Ovid maidenly honesty in it than she had ever exhibited in that town, that she stood before him and, at a word from his assistant, pivoted as a Lucile mannequin pivots to show off a gown. The familiar gesture restored her assurance and, as she faced Dreifeldt again, she smiled. But the smile

of the great Helen would have been lost on Dreifeldt. He was not even bothering to notice her.

To her it was not Dreifeldt she was pivoting for, it was all Broadway! To Broadway she was smiling, and to Broadway offering thus her best grace and youth and beauty. And Broadway had shut its eyes, was sagging with utter boredom. It was an intolerable rebuff.

"Damn you, look at me!" and as she cried it, her small fist came down hard on the table before the swollen image of Broadway. And Broadway looked. How could he help it then?

For a moment she had all his attention. It was all in the world that she wanted. She answered his glare with a smile, a guileless smile, that greeted a world that was so altogether ripping and so free from trouble and worry and all that sort of thing. And Broadway looked and nodded and grunted:

"You're took."

Someway or other she got out and away, and walked down the street that was to love her, without dancing and singing all the way as she felt she should.

It was only human not to tell Roddy at once, to sneak into his studio with a dejection that was a screaming performance and that would move to delight any gallery in the world. And when Roderick had only abuse for her neglect of him, and announced coolly that it would be convenient for him to marry her tomorrow, humbly to answer, "Yes, sir."

The ceremony was not performed at the Little Church Around the Corner, nor at any of the celebrated shrines where the brides in Irish lace and diamond solitaires vow to love, honour and obey. The artist and his dancing girl were not of these. They were of that fragile world, whose estate is but pearl powder and whose heritage a fiddler's tune. And so they were married without pomp and ceremony, coming next in line after two negroes named Lily and Cuthbert, at the City Hall.

And Helen, thinking all the time what a good joke she was springing on Rod-erick (said to be a common reflection of the bride's) was so amused that the clerk interrupted his reading of the worldly goods paragraph to tell them, "Just laugh it out," which they both did.

VII

Of course it is only five years since La Belle Hobbs has been known at all in the theatrical world, five years from obscurity to a world-wide reputation. Dreifeldt, the manager, it was said by the *Times* and *Tribune*, had found her doing a tarantella in an East Side cabaret in order to send her brother through Yale and, appreciating her ability, had engaged her at once for his next revue.

There were also jocular Reisenweber cynics who said she had dropped an iced coin down his neck just before he rose to speak at a dinner to the fashionable mystical playwright of the day. It was merely that Mr. Dreifeldt had tried to speak in French; and then the additionally astonishing rumour came to light that not only did poor Helen have to dance all night for the brother's college education, but she also had to wait on table between times—and Mr. Dreifeldt had not been able to conceal his surprise at finding his consommé passed to him by one of his own ladies of the chorus. It all duly got into the *Times* and *Tribune* the way things will.

In fact the poor girl seemed doomed never to be spared public attention. She was the one who had that unfortunate accident on the stage, not that it wasn't very graceful, and of course there were girls on the stage at that moment who had less on, but it did attract notice.

It was useless, it was reported, to try to keep a girl like that in the back row, or in any row for that matter. A

song-writer had to give up his trip to Florida to write in a special number for her. Then the Bourbon affair placed her high in the skyline of celebrities. There was a great deal of sympathy for the marquis, strange to say, even among the middle classes. It was felt that he was not to be blamed for the business. What could any man do in the hands of such a woman! It was generally known that he wanted to marry her. And then, lo and behold, a husband had appeared on the scene. The marquis had never dreamt that there was a Mr. Hobbs; he was a very innocent marquis. He was also a Frenchman and a gentleman; he persisted in his suit.

Mr. Hobbs did not demand pistols for two. He was an artist—somebody that woman had raked out of the gutter presumably—and he did a sketch of the marquis, a caricature in the act of proposing, that amused Helen. She never could see the marquis afterwards without remembering it, and beginning to laugh. Once he had to leave his box at the theater before she could continue her performance. It made a great deal of talk, more trying to the proud old French family than marriage would have been. The chivalric note was so lacking. There was only one thing left the marquis, everybody felt—as he did himself apparently.

The episode did a great deal to advertise Mr. Hobbs' art. A book of his drawings called "Hobbies" was published and sold big on both sides of the Atlantic. It went far in paying off the enormous debts Helen had contracted on the Rue de la Paix for those trifles she could not live without. She wouldn't know how to do it, she said, and her plea to the *Times* and *Tribune* on the subject sounded a delicate, wistful note. Indeed, how *could* she know?



The Human Brain

By Eugene Lyons

THE most consummately wonderful mechanism in the cosmos is the human brain. The product of a million years' evolution, it transcends even the dreams of the gods in power and intricate delicacy. It is finely balanced and capable of a range of activities without parallel in all the immensity of space and spirit.

Not only can it generalize, thus injecting symphony into life's orchestration. Even more overwhelmingly admirable is its power to differentiate, its sensitiveness to fine shades of sense impressions. The slightest nuance in visual or phonic or tactual tone it detects with a sureness

that sets man apart from the brute.

When a brain is in operation, all the angels stand at awed attention and watch.

"Lo and behold, ye heavenly hosts—the Master's handiwork is as wonderful as the Master. Observe the brain of that human speck down yonder. The product of an eternity's nurturing he is applying to his task. The godlike capacity to judge accurately, to synthesize and to analyze, he is focusing upon his work. Great are the conquests of the human mind."

And, all unaware, Gus Simpson continues his concentrated thinking: He is choosing a necktie.



To Raphine

By P. H. Belknap

*Thou art like one
Beholding a man
Sentenced to death
And led to the volts
For a generous crime.*

*Only in thy case
Both of us know
Thou art the Portia
With beautiful tears
Who passeth the doom.*



The Dardanelles Puff-Box

(A One-Act Play)

By J. R. Milne

THE scene is the library of a Long Island country house. It might just as well be laid in New Jersey, but Long Island seems to be preferred these days. The walls are lined with built-in book-cases, broken only by a window—French variety—a wall safe, and one door. There should have been two doors, but the foot-lights were in the way. It is eleven-thirty by the clock on the table, which, by the way—the clock, I mean—is too small to be read at a distance. However, this detail has nothing to do with the plot. The table is one of the sort that the conspirators, or the board of directors, sit at in movie plays. There are the usual chairs, scattered hither and yon.

The door opens, and a woman enters. In morning—, street—, or evening-dress she might admit twenty-five years. In her present garb—kimono, or something of that kind—she can't be more than eighteen. Of course, evening faces are different from morning ones. . . .

Her pink slippers glide noiselessly across the floor. She kneels before the safe, and works the combination-knob a few times. The lines between her eyes show that she is annoyed. She is thinking. She tries again. While she is thus employed, the door opens, and a young man enters. He is in ordinary street dress. He contemplates her for a moment, amusedly, and then closes the door and walks to her side. She is startled, naturally, but recovers her composure quickly.

YOUNG MAN

What's the idea, Grace?

GRACE

(Pettishly.) I'm trying to open this thing, of course.

YOUNG MAN

(Nodding wisely.) I almost guessed that. (He seems puzzled.) Everybody in bed so early?

GRACE

(Returning her attention to the safe.) Yes. There was nothing else to do. Besides, everybody is just Ethel Channing and my husband. The others won't be here till tomorrow. How's it happen you've come tonight, George?

GEORGE

Motored out. Hot in town. (Kneel-

ing by her side, and gazing at the knob.) Do you know what you're trying to do, Grace? I mean, do you know the combination?

GRACE

(A bit forlornly.) I'm afraid I've forgotten it. But . . . (hopefully) I'm almost sure it begins with seven . . .

GEORGE

That's interesting. . . (Rising to his feet.) Sit down, and tell me about it. Perhaps I can help.

GRACE

(Allowing herself to be thrust into a chair.) It's Ethel Channing, the hateful thing!

GEORGE

(Aroused.) Hateful thing? What have you women been fighting about?

GRACE

Ssshhh! Not so loud, George. You'll wake Harry. And we haven't been fighting.

GEORGE

Then what the devil? . . .

(He opens his cigarette case, and busies himself with a match.)

GRACE

(Discovering a handkerchief from somewhere in the folds of her attire, and making use of it as a blotter.) It's all on account of the vanity case you gave me . . . that jeweled Turkish thing . . .

GEORGE

(Very much in the dark.) Don't you like it? Are you ashamed of it . . . or anything? . . .

GRACE

Don't be so stupid! Ethel was with you when you bought it.

GEORGE

(Grinning reminiscently.) Yeh; and she rather wanted it herself. What are you crying about? *(This last in sudden alarm.)*

GRACE

Harry is so jealous. . . .

GEORGE

(Endeavoring to be gallant.) I don't blame him.

GRACE

(Furiously.) What do you mean!

GEORGE

Why, of course. . . . Well, any man with a wife as beautiful as you would be jealous. It's his duty. *(Then carelessly.)* You can't very well blame Harry.

GRACE

I'm not blaming Harry. I love him.

(She becomes mollified and venomous.) But Ethel, the hateful thing!

GEORGE

(Bewildered.) That's the second time you've called her hateful. What has she done to you?

GRACE

Nothing . . . yet. It's what she will do.

(She wipes her eyes despairingly.)

GEORGE

(Slightly relieved.) Oh, I wouldn't worry.

(He rises and begins pacing the room, cautiously steering his course from the safe.)

GRACE

(Musingly.) If Harry only hadn't that awful mania for showing my jewels. . . .

GEORGE

(Seeing the plot untangle.) Oh-h-h! Harry will show the jewels. . . . And then, what?

GRACE

Ethel will be sure to speak about your giving me the case, and then . . .

(She makes an expressive gesture.)

GEORGE

Well, what then?

(He stops his rambling, and seats himself uncomfortably on the corner of the table.)

GRACE

(Sadly.) Why, Harry will begin to think all kinds of things. He's so jealous. . . .

GEORGE

(Glancing at her curiously.) Didn't you tell him that I gave it to you?

GRACE

An expensive present like that? Of course not.

(George wilts before her surprised eyes. He inhales his cigarette before continuing.)

GEORGE

How did you account for it?

GRACE

(*Blushing guiltily.*) I gave the credit to Uncle Mack. I didn't think you'd mind so very much. . . . He's dead now, and can't argue. (*Rising, and going to the safe.*) And now I've got to open this awful thing. Why did you ever give me that beastly case!

(*He feels rather small and inconsequential. The gratitude of these women!*)

GEORGE

(*Following her.*) It's no use, Grace. You can't do it unless you know how.

GRACE

Then you try.

(*She retreats to allow him room. GEORGE obediently grasps the knob gingerly. He plays with it for several seconds. Then he affects the professional, and places his ear to hear the tumblers fall. Evidently the hearing does him little good, for he raises his head, and twists the knob back and forth half-heartedly.*)

GEORGE

I never studied burglary.

(*He is rather sullen. He gets to his feet, and shakes the cramp out of his legs.*)

GRACE

(*Severely.*) You must persevere.

GEORGE

Be reasonable, Grace!

(*He puts his hands on her shoulders soothingly.*)

GRACE

(*Shrilly, dramatically.*) Take your hands off me! I'm a married woman!

(*Astounded, he falls back to a safe distance.*)

GEORGE

Thank God. . . . (*He debates whether he had better leave her to her troubles.*) Just wait till tomorrow, Grace. . . . I'm sure. . . .

GRACE

Of course you're sure. Harry won't be angry at you when he hears about the case. It's always the poor woman.

. . . (*Shaking her head emphatically.*) No! (*Steps are heard. She turns to him, frightened.*) You must go, quickly. . . . Someone is coming. Through the window. . . . Hurry! Hide on the piazza. . . .

GEORGE

(*Dubiously.*) Hadn't you better go? I'm dressed, you see, while you. . . .

GRACE

(*Pushing him out.*) And wouldn't it be splendid if I were found on the piazza, this way! . . . Hurry!

(*GEORGE exits clumsily. She runs to the table, and snatches up a book. It is a copy of Taussig. The door opens. She looks up from her book, affecting unconcern. The newcomer is as lavishly clothed as herself. GRACE feels herself upon a plane of equality.*)

GRACE

Hello, Ethel. Searching for romance? . . .

ETHEL

(*Smiling.*) I thought I heard voices. . . .

(*She glances about the room. Then she notices the open window. She looks at GRACE knowingly, and seats herself.*)

GRACE

Couldn't you sleep, dear?

ETHEL

(*Sighing.*) It's the heat. . . .

GEORGE

(*Whispering involuntarily.*) Damn the heat!

ETHEL

Did you speak, Grace?

GRACE

(*Her lips twitching nervously.*) Certainly not. You were speaking of the heat. . . .

ETHEL

Yes . . . I thought, since everyone was in bed, that I might sit for a while on the piazza . . .

GRACE

(*In a panic, but striving to control her voice.*) Why don't you, dear?

ETHEL

(*Peering at the title of the book lying open on the table.*) That's a strange subject for you to study . . . Especially so late at night.

GRACE

It does seem queer, doesn't it. But I decided that as Harry's wife I should learn how to manage a household. And, like you, I couldn't sleep. . . .

ETHEL

(*Laughing pedantically.*) I'm afraid you won't find much information about the home in Taussig, my dear.

(*GRACE restrains a sudden intense desire to pull the other's hair.*)

GRACE

Can you recommend something to me?

ETHEL

(*Rising languidly, and moving to the door.*) Well, I think for you, a good housekeeper would be helpful . . .

GRACE

(*Wishing that she were a daughter of the Borgias.*) Didn't you say you were going to sit on the piazza?

ETHEL

I wouldn't trouble you for worlds, dear.

(*She goes out, leaving GRACE to wonder just how much she knew, and to ponder over any possible double entendre. She goes to the window, and beckons to GEORGE. He enters dejectedly.*)

GEORGE

The beans are certainly spilled this time! I'm going to bed . . .

GRACE

(*Grasping his arm authoritatively.*) You are *not*. You've got to stay and help me. The safe *must* be opened.

GEORGE

(*Abjectly.*) Won't you wait till tomorrow? Everything will be all right . . .

GRACE

You must do it *now*! If Ethel ever saw that case, she would guess that it was you who was on the piazza to-night. As it is, my reputation with her has gone . . . Why did you *speak*? She heard you.

(*He groans.*)

GEORGE

Just a minute . . .

(*He goes to the door softly, and peeks out. He is apparently satisfied, and retraces his steps.*)

GRACE

Now, get busy.

GEORGE

But I can't open it without the combination. Have you ever seen Harry with anything that looked as if it might be it? . . . Written on paper, I mean.

GRACE

(*With a woman's hope in an emergency.*) It might be in the table.

(*She opens the drawer and digs over the contents. He watches her. Although disgusted, he cannot restrain a laugh.*)

GEORGE

Do you think Harry would be likely to put it there for any thief to find at convenience?

GRACE

(*Uttering a little cry.*) Here it is!

(*He stretches out his hand eagerly. He snorts.*)

GEORGE

East, nine by seven; South, ten by fifteen . . .

GRACE

Come!

(She pulls his arm.)

GEORGE

It's only some of your husband's architectural figurings.

GRACE

(Her face woebegone.) Then we're just where we started . . . Isn't there any way you can open it without the combination?

GEORGE

(Sarcastically.) If I had a diamond drill, and a fuse, and some nitro-glycerine I might coax it open. . . . Those are some of the things that magazine burglars use.

GRACE

(Far too obsessed with her desire to see any humor in the situation.) I haven't any nitro-glycerine; but I could get some gas from the garage. Would that do? Perhaps we could find a drill there, too . . .

GEORGE

It's impossible, I tell you. And you'd better get to bed before another explorer gets us compromised.

(She suffers a loss of dignity by plumping down into a chair.)

GRACE

(Bursting into tears.) You're so dismal . . . and unsympathetic . . .*(GEORGE, terrified, sits on the arm, and pats her soothingly but timidly. He remembers the previous rebuke.)*

GEORGE

There, there . . .

GRACE

Couldn't we hire a professional burglar from the city?

GEORGE

They don't advertise as a rule.

(She sobs, and he strokes her hair.)

SS—May—6

GRACE

I wish I'd married you instead of Harry. He's so jealous . . .

(The twistings of GEORGE's face end in a grimace. ETHEL slips in through the window. She regards them grimly for a moment.)

ETHEL

I thought this love affair was *fini*.*(Both look up in consternation. GEORGE, petrified, remains seated on the arm of the chair.)*

GRACE

You hateful thing! You spy!

GEORGE

Stop it, Grace!

(She subsides in fresh tears.)

GRACE

Ohhhhh . . .!

ETHEL

I'm going to get a . . . a *(Her eyes clash with GEORGE's.)* Anyway, I'm going to get one . . . *(She is defiant.)*

GRACE

Go ahead and get one. I don't care. Get two if you want them . . .

GEORGE

(Earnestly.) But, Ethel . . . You don't understand. We were just . . .

ETHEL

(Interrupting testily.) Don't whine, George. I don't like it. Still, I can't see why you chose the library. It would have been far more fitting . . . upstairs.

GRACE

Oh, dear . . .!

ETHEL

Now you're talking, lovey! Never dissimulate. And you really ought to kiss him now and then.

(The door opens, and a weary figure in a dressing-gown slops in. His slippers are a trifle large. He smiles.)

ETHEL

Why, Harry!

HARRY

Thought I heard voices, and came to investigate. It's hot . . .

GEORGE

Damn the heat!

HARRY

(*Noting the proximity of his wife and GEORGE. He probably glimpses her costume also.*) What the devil . . . Say, young man, you're in my place!

(*GRACE and GEORGE jump to their feet hastily.*)

ETHEL

It's quite all right, Harry. I just called Grace down to tell her . . .

(*GRACE runs to her husband.*)

GRACE

They're engaged, Harry dear.

(*GEORGE scowls; ETHEL frowns. They capitulate to her pleading eyes.*)

ETHEL

Well . . .

HARRY

(*Giving GEORGE his hand.*) Congratulations, of course, old man. But why exclude me from the party?

GEORGE

(*Feebly.*) Oh, we were going to tell you, too. I thought you were asleep.

HARRY

I'm damned sleepy . . . Guess I'll turn in again. 'Night.

(*The door closes behind him. GRACE gazes at ETHEL wretchedly, and then lowers her eyes.*)

ETHEL

So I'm a hateful thing! I don't seem to be very generous with my hate . . .

GRACE

It was an awful thing to do . . . What can you do? Of course, engagements are often broken . . .

ETHEL

(*Shrugging her shoulders.*) What were you two doing when I came first?

GEORGE

Trying to rob the safe.

ETHEL

(*Suspiciously.*) I may be dense to-night . . .

GEORGE

So was I. But Grace was stubborn.

ETHEL

Is this an explanation?

GRACE

(*Laconical, since he has been tried too far.*) Safe; jealous husband; vanity case in safe; former lover's gift; attempted theft; all on account of fears of another woman . . .

(*The door opens, and HARRY strides in, bearing a small casket.*)

HARRY

Thought you might like to see Grace's toys. Ethel . . .

GRACE

Oh, Harry! It's so late . . . Ethel must be very tired. Tomorrow . . .

(*GEORGE collapses into a chair. A whole night's work and worry with worse than no result!*)

HARRY

(*Crestfallen.*) Perhaps you are right. . . . Of course, she is too tired . . .

(*He slides out with the box under his arm.*)

GRACE

(*Gulping.*) I'm awfully sorry, George. I've made an awful mess of things . . . I've been so foolish . . .

ETHEL
(*Bitterly.*) And you've spoiled my night . . .

GRACE
Spoiled your night? I know it's been very annoying . . .

ETHEL
We'd planned to give your morals such a shock tomorrow morning. And engaged people can't sleep in the same room . . . It isn't customary . . .

GRACE
You're married!
(*GEORGE nods, but remains discreetly silent.*)

ETHEL
Yes; we're married. And we'll have to postpone the announcement for another day to save your skin. I'm a hateful thing!

GRACE
(*Hugging her.*) You're splendid! But why didn't you tell me, George? It would have prevented this mix-up.

GEORGE
(*Moodily.*) Ethel and I agreed to say nothing till tomorrow morning—

this morning, I mean. We wanted to shock the whole house. They wouldn't know, you see. But it doesn't make much difference, since nobody's here yet.

GRACE
(*Winking at* *ETHEL.*) But you know, your room is next to George's. And there's a balcony . . .

ETHEL
Thank you, dearie. I am not without my own resources . . .

(*GEORGE rises, and GRACE senses a hint.*)

GRACE
Good night . . . (*Hesitating at the door.*) The vanity case will be your wedding present, Ethel.

ETHEL
(*Approaching* *GEORGE.*) Thank you, dear. I was going to suggest that myself. It would be such a dear present . . .

(*GRACE fidgets at the door, blinks nervously at the preoccupied couple, and flees.*)

CURTAIN



MEN are to be classified according to their intelligence. Women according to the intelligence of the men they appeal to.



A MAN'S pleasantest memory is usually something that some woman or other is trying to forget.



A WOMAN who is the cynosure of all eyes soon or late becomes the cynosure of all ears.

Dilemma

By J. K. Nicholson

HE stood patiently beside her awaiting her decision. In one end of the room an orchestra was playing softly . . . a lovely sensuous waltz. He glanced furtively down into her dainty countenance and something akin to pity stole over him as he read the unveiled perplexity there. How well he knew the problem which confronted her. So many times in similar situations he had witnessed the same struggle. Nor did he make an effort to influence her choice. To her he seemed so big, so suave, so imperturbable. Humbly she sensed his superiority. Her little heart beat fast as she felt herself the object of his cool scrutiny. With embarrassment born of hesitation she started to speak, then changed her mind. . . . At last she pointed a well-manicured finger at the most poisonous-looking French pastry on the tray, and the waiter deftly lifted it to her plate with a fork.



Lace-Like Loves of Childhood

By Nelson Antrim Crawford

LACE-LIKE loves of childhood,
Thin, white, unglowing,
Back they come to trouble us
Who love the fire and its burning.
They come in sharp angles
Seen through windy mists.
Lace-like loves of childhood,
Unsought, from far returning—
A copy-book and a blue ribbon,
Starched white muslin and little scared eyes—
Back they come to trouble us.



A COUPLE of days of Grace and then along comes Ruth.



Pandora

By Edith Chapman

I

MRS. RANDOLPH led her sister into her bedroom, where the lighted lamps gave a suggestion of warmth to the otherwise cold ivory and mauve. The lavender chintzes became almost rose colour, the gray walls less opaque. This warmth was reflected also onto the lovely, restless faces of the two women, gilding the pallor of the one, softening the other. Lucy began fumbling with her sister's coat, burying her fingers in the fur of it, and tugging childishly at the heavy buttons. "Gail darling, how good you look. No, don't frown. I *shall* be extravagant if I want to."

By way of response Gail pulled the fumbling fingers down from her neck, and lifting her sister in her strong, thin arms, carried her across the room to a chair in front of the fireplace. Then she stood opposite her, laughing a little. "You weigh as much as a ten-year-old child." She threw off her coat and unpinned her hat and veil. "I should have been a man, Lucy. I'm too energetic for a woman."

"Yes, you *are* rather vital. Sit down, do. You make me nervous prowling about. And tell me how you like my dress."

Gail raised her lorgnon. It was this lorgnon, among other things, that set people by the ears. They counted it as by no means the least offensive of her outrageous mannerisms. Lucy was in the habit of defending her sister in public, and half agreeing, in private, with the defamers of what she regarded as the other's quite superfluous affectations.

"Don't stare at me through that thing; I'm not Mrs. Pierpont Faxton."

Gail paid no attention. "That dress isn't new, is it? I've certainly seen it before."

"You've never seen it before. It came from Lucile's this morning."

"Well, then, you've had another dress just like it. When, Lucy? Don't be a little devil. Tell me."

The lorgnon fell from her hands. She slipped them into the pockets of her skirt and stood scowling and biting her lips. Suddenly the scowl lifted. "I've got it! Long gilt mirror; gray high-waisted, crêpe de chine dress; Ivan Tre-koff blinking in front of it."

The words were sharply cut off as Lucy's hand leapt out and covered her mouth. "Hush; George!" And she pointed through the open door to the room across the way.

Gail nodded and studied the opposite door.

"It's rather a poor fire you have there," she muttered.

Then, in a louder voice, "George, are you there? Come in here a minute, will you? Lucy and I want a man's service."

Her brother-in-law, tall, thin, supercilious, answered the summons. He lifted the wood as directed, made some appropriate allusion to Gail's arrival and was about to leave the room as stiffly as he had come, with no apparent recognition of the fact of his wife's presence among them, when Gail detained him.

"What's your hurry? I haven't seen you for more than two weeks. How do you happen to be home today? Are you ill?"

"A touch of the grippe." Randolph

leaned against the door-way, and stared imperviously at his sister-in-law. All this time his wife's eyes had never left him. They were fastened on him in a piteous, agonized scrutiny.

"Why don't you sit down?" she urged, and her voice, which she tried to make matter-of-fact, quavered and threatened to break. "I was going to ring for tea in a minute anyway. We can just as well have it now."

"Not on my account. I don't want any tea. And you'll enjoy it much better without a gross male about. You must have all sorts of things to say to each other." He still continued to ignore his wife, and to address his remarks to Gail.

The latter nodded briskly, seeming to consent to his view of it. "Yes, after all, tea in a boudoir isn't exactly your note, is it, George? Now, with Trekkoff, on the other hand . . ."

"Might I ask who is Trekkoff?" The words came, very carefully modulated. Nothing betrayed the man's interest except the quivering of the little nervous muscles around his mouth.

"Oh, an old flame of mine. A Russian painter whom I came within an ace of marrying. Lucy and I were talking about it just before you came in. I was reminded of him by Lucy's dress. She had a gown like that the year Trekkoff and I were seeing such a lot of each other. He liked it immensely, and used to beg her to wear it."

Gail paused a moment; she let her eyes wander from Randolph and acquire an intense, rather abstract expression.

Her voice, when she spoke again, was in the same manner subtle and detached. "Indeed, I've wondered a good many times since whether it wasn't Lucy whom he gradually grew to love, all the time that I thought, and even he thought, it was I . . . he liked that particular dress of hers because it made her look so childlike. That was his name for her, 'little child.' Only he said it in Russian always, a singularly beautiful word." Gail's eyes seemed to expand and to darken with reminiscence.

As Lucy had listened, her face had

grown paler and more anxious than ever. It was only as her husband's short laugh rang out that the strained look disappeared.

"'Little child!' Well, I declare, he had her number. That's about what she is, still. Eh, Lucy?" And then, as his wife's imploring eyes at last met and drew his, "An utterly irresistible child."

And with that, he disappeared.

Lucy burst into tears.

"It's only nervousness," she explained, trying to smile. "It's the reaction. I'm so afraid of him when he gets jealous that way. He's so different; so savage."

Gail sat down beside her sister and gazed at the fire. "I flatter myself I extricated you rather cleverly. As regards Trekkoff at least, George is completely and permanently bamboozled."

"Gail, you were wonderful. You sounded so convincing that I almost believed you myself. I wish I had your presence of mind."

"It isn't presence of mind, my dear. It's merely the technique of lying. For Heaven's sake, Lucy, why don't you cultivate that faculty a bit?"

"I suppose it's because I'm too stupid, or too cowardly, or both. I'm absolutely literal-minded. But you're different . . . How did you dare, Gail, to go as near the truth as you did?"

"That 'dyedosluka' business you mean? That *was* a bit raw. But I couldn't resist that part of it. Trekkoff's voice has been ringing in my ears ever since I first came in today and saw you in that gown. How that man loved you, Lucy! His was the kind that makes other men's look rather sick and homœopathic. I've sometimes wondered if you didn't make a mistake, after all. Haven't you ever been sorry you decided as you did?"

Lucy shook her head. "No, never. George has been the only one so far as I'm concerned. The first one, and the last one."

Gail looked up with an irritated frown.

"Oh, you're such a fool, Lucy, with your 'only ones.' Such a didactic little

fool. And your husband's another. Why should we have had to *lie*? When you knew Trekoff you hadn't even heard of George Randolph. By what right does a man appropriate a woman's past, as well as her present and future?"

Lucy's hands worried each other nervously. "Oh, it isn't a question of right. George admits the utter unreasonableness of it. He simply can't help it, that's all. However," more brightly, "it's blown over, this time, thanks to you."

"Yes, this time. But what about the next?"

"Oh, I shan't worry. Perhaps there won't be a next. And in the meantime, I'm so happy."

"Are you really happy?" Gail stared at her sister's little fretting hands.

The other leaned nearer as if not daring to trust to so great a distance what she had to say. Her white, kindled face was almost too intense. "I'm so happy that sometimes I'm afraid. It seems so extravagant, so—"

"Well, I wouldn't worry if I were you, not so long as he continues at regular intervals to make you suffer . . . You incorrigible Puritan."

Lucy didn't answer. The tears continued to well up into her eyes.

There came a moment when her sister could stand it no longer.

"Lucy, stop that weeping. It's setting me crazy. I'm not sympathizing with you at all. I'm simply watching every tear that trickles down your cheeks and storing it away as so much copy. That's the sordid, slavish kind of thing it is to write . . . You're just a copyist, an exploiter."

Resolutely Lucy wiped her eyes. "I met Fred downtown yesterday. 'How is Gail?' I said. And at the very sound of your name he began to glisten with pride. He grinned that big sheepish grin of his. 'More wonderful and wiser than ever. She's been working day and night for about two weeks. Another masterpiece, I imagine.' And he glowed up to the roots of his hair. What is it that makes big men so pathetic, Gail? I just wanted to kiss him; he looked so

big and innocent and devoted. You certainly can't complain of anything 'homœopathic' about *your* husband's love."

Gail rose and began pacing the room. "Oh, stop prattling about love."

She picked a book off the writing desk and read the title with a shrug of amazement.

"*Zarathustra*! Since when, Lucy, have you been exploring Nietzsche?"

"Since yesterday. Your esteemed Jewish friend, Mayer Weber, lent it to George. I was bored last night for something to read and I thought I'd try it."

"Well, how do you find it?"

"I like it," the other stammered a little lamely. "I haven't got very far."

"Why did you call Mayer Weber *my* friend?"

"Can't I? To you? It isn't as if I'd said it to Fred."

"And if you had," Gail answered dryly, "no harm would have been done. Fred isn't George. He wouldn't be in the least disturbed."

"No, I forgot how lucky you are."

"Lucky!" The word clicked with a sharp disagreeable ring. "Lucky? You mean that Fred isn't jealous? Do you mean to tell me that you aren't really awfully pleased with the idea that George cares enough about you to be jealous of you? Even if sometimes the result is a little uncomfortable?"

Lucy a little bashfully groped for her sister's hand, and, then, thinking better of it, leaned back again.

"Gail, if George could trust me the way Fred trusts you it would be the only thing lacking to make me utterly happy. I love my husband so much and I believe so in his love for me that I accept its real limitation. But I suffer. It's so degrading, jealousy." She paused to control her voice. "You don't know how thankful I've always been for you that Fred was different in that respect. You couldn't submit to it as I do. You'd fight it, I'm afraid, even at the cost of your happiness."

Gail didn't answer. Instead she

turned the pages of the book back to where the owner's signature was written on the fly-leaf.

"Tell me," she asked moodily, "what does your husband think of Mayer Weber?"

"He thinks he's altogether too much in love with you."

Gail's eyes glinted. "Did he say so?"

"Yes; do you mind?"

"No, I don't mind; neither George's saying it, nor Weber's being."

"Gail dear, don't talk like that. Of course you don't mean it, but—"

"How do you know what I mean? It *doesn't* matter to me. That doesn't need to imply that I'm in love with him. As a matter of fact I can't *bear* him. He's too conceited—and *too* thin."

"Gail."

"Lucy." The edge of defiance sharpened in the other's voice. "His too thinness is a very important factor. If he weren't so thin and so pale and so generally theatrical looking, Fred's honour might be in danger. You can't tell."

"You talk like a fool. I don't see how you can talk that way, even in fun. It's so cheap, and so rotten bad to Fred. Sometimes I wonder if you half appreciate him?"

"Probably not. Do you also wonder whether *he* appreciates *me*?"

"Well, he certainly treats you as though he did. Trusts you absolutely. Wants you to lead your own life. Gives you absolute freedom."

"Freedom!" Gail laughed. "Well, what's the use of freedom if you can't use it, test it out, find out what it will do?"

She picked up her hat and began pinning it on in front of the mirror, hardly looking at herself as she pinned. As she turned back to her sister, it was to have her eyes held by the other's solemn staring gaze.

"Don't you love Fred?"

"Love? There you go again." Then, more sharply, "Yes, I love him. But does he love me? That's what I want to know."

"And how do you propose to find

out? By experimenting with it until you *kill* it?"

She laid a light hand on her sister's coat. "Be patient, Gail," she whispered. "The way to find out isn't always to go prodding and slashing. A human emotion is very sensitive; sometimes if you just touch it, you bruise it and it dies."

II

FRED HUNTER unlocked the front door as the big clock in the hall struck eleven. He found his wife asleep on the couch, the book she had been reading sprawling on the floor beside her, some of its pages bent under, just as it had fallen from her hand. Her black hair had come unfastened, and hung back from her forehead and over the edge of the couch in straight, heavy masses. Her face was like a washed slate; all the lines of moodiness and fatigue had disappeared. She seemed to him perhaps more beautiful that way than any other. He woke her by lifting her into his arms.

"Fred, when did you come in? Is it late? Was I asleep?"

"Yes, it was cruel to wake you I suppose." He looked remorsefully at his large, awkward hands.

Seeing this, she laughed. "Why, you blessed child, of course you should have waked me. I couldn't have stayed here all night in any event. But tell me about your meeting. Were you very brilliant? Were all those clever doctors awfully impressed?"

He sat down beside her and took her onto his lap. "I don't think I talked very well. Surgery isn't my line, you know. And I kept thinking of you."

"Of me?"

"Yes, of how much I'd rather be here. I hate it, Gail, when I have to go out in the evening. I still hate it, after all these years." He drew her hand into his and pulled out the long fingers.

"How silly you are! But it's very nice. After all then, you *do* love me, don't you?"

"After all what?"

"Oh, I don't know." She laughed a

little choked laugh. "After all these years, I suppose."

They lapsed into a discussion of various intimate and household affairs. The man he had talked with after the meeting, their engagements for the coming week, an etching which she proposed to buy. It was only as they were on the point of going to bed that he drew a letter out of his pocket and handed it to her. "I almost forgot this. It's from Weber. He was at the meeting; he asked me to deliver it to you."

She opened it, read it, and then offered it to her husband. He took it and laid it quietly on the table.

"Why don't you read it?" she inquired. Her voice was almost querulous. "Aren't you even curious?"

"Not in the least."

She flung herself away from him with a restless, feverish movement. "I can't understand you at all. You know Weber likes me, likes me a lot, and yet you haven't the slightest interest in our relationship."

"Not the slightest. It's your affair, not mine."

"I *can't* understand you." She could only repeat her former statement with an added note of bewilderment. "You must be utterly different from most men—and *women*. I'm not like that, for example. If you got a letter from some other woman, I shouldn't ask to see it, but I should be dying to have you show it to me."

"That means you don't trust me, or my love for you. You don't believe in it."

"Oh, trust! Is anyone really trustworthy?" Her eyes grew subtle and almost unhealthy in their brilliance. "Fred, I *know* that Mayer Weber is in love with me. Don't you care?"

"No."

"Not even a little?"

"No."

"Why not?" It was the most she could do with it, for sheer irritation.

"I don't know. I suppose it's because it's so utterly natural that he should be—so inevitable, almost."

"And supposing I loved him? Wouldn't you mind that either?"

"Ah, that's different."

"Would that make you angry?"

"No, not angry. One isn't angry when one suffers. Besides, I shouldn't blame you; I should blame myself, that I hadn't been able to keep your love."

"Oh, you are impossible." Her frown stiffened for a moment and then relaxed into a smile. She came over to him and put her arms about him, nestling her head in his neck.

He patted the bowed head, holding her very closely.

"You silly child," he muttered. Then, whimsically, "Well, *do* you love Mayer Weber?"

"No, I don't. I can't bear him. But I almost wish I did, to spite you. Just to see what you would do."

"Let's stop talking about Weber, Gail. Let's forget everything except each other. You do love me, Gail?"

Slowly she relaxed in his arms. Her moody face grew tranquil. "You know I do."

"Then nothing else matters, does it, darling? Let's just be happy."

"So happy," she agreed.

And she held up her lips to be kissed.

III

WEBER sat opposite Gail and smiled into her scowling eyes.

It was another of those nights when Hunter had been called away. The room was lighted with lamps and candles. It was a cold night; there was a fire burning on the fireplace.

"So here we sit, silent as usual. It's a bad plan to be silent, Madame Gail. In the silence thoughts are apt to become audible. Haven't you sometimes found it so?"

As he finished speaking, he thrust closer to her his worn, thin face which looked wanner and uglier than ever.

Looking at it, she continued to scowl. The eyes were very good; large and dark, with that oriental cast to them which gave the exotic note to an otherwise commonplace exterior; his nose

was decidedly aquiline; his lips were almost as pale as the rest of his face, and they quivered in a disagreeable, impotent manner. Brusquely she moved her chair farther off. "Don't be theatrical and don't talk any more in that weird, Freudian fashion."

"Why Freudian?" His instant accommodation might have filled her with misgiving on its own account.

"Oh, it had his omniscient note." She jerked her chair still farther off, and reached for a cigarette. He tried to light it for her, but she was ahead of him. With the cigarette between her teeth, she felt better; more removed and mistress of the situation. She stared at him and still scowled meditatively.

"Don't scowl so, Madame Gail. You are covering your forehead with ugly little marks like scars. You try to think too much. Do you know that ideas come more easily when you let them alone? You are apt, that way, to get a few really worth while; in place of all your cheap, quite obvious conclusions. After all, you know, your mind is distinctly commonplace. The stuff you write is the worst sort of dead-level mediocrity. Why don't you give up writing and rooting about so conscientiously among your little, middle-class ideas? There is something you could do infinitely better. You could be a very charming woman, if you'd let yourself. Why don't you relax for a bit and just drift?"

A slow deep flush had mounted in her cheeks. She hadn't the *sang-froid* for this sort of stinging personality.

However, at his last word, she managed a quick, ironic smile. "Drifting is so haphazard. I prefer to direct my movements."

"Are you sure of your competence to do so?"

"For practical purposes, yes."

"Well," Weber yawned, "I'm so glad you're not my wife. I don't like such competence in women. However, it might be very good for you."

"To be your wife?" She gave a contemptuous, insulting laugh.

"Yes. I should take you down a

peg. I shouldn't allow you such an exalted opinion of yourself."

"How would you manage?"

"I might beat you." And he smiled insolently into her haughty, imperious face.

It was the look as much as the words which infuriated her.

"Beat me? Oh, no, you wouldn't; because you couldn't! You aren't man enough!"

This retort turned him as livid as though she had struck him. But he managed a smile. "I should certainly beat you if you said things like that to me."

The sight of him, wounded in his vanity, yet cringing and smiling, became intolerable to her. He was getting on her nerves. There was something about his very physical presence which struck her as morbid and unhealthy. Perhaps most of all she hated that perpetual smile which was almost, yet not quite a sneer; with above it the solemn, profound misery of his eyes. She disliked his thin yellow hands. Suddenly she felt that she must be rid of him.

"Go away, Mayer; go home, please."

The words were spoken almost without her consent. She trembled a little at their imperious frankness.

He arose with that languid indifference which she had once considered his charm. "You aren't in a very nice mood tonight."

"No," she agreed. "I'm horrid. And you seem to make me worse. That's why I want you to go."

Meantime she wondered how long he would continue to stand there, smiling and rubbing his hands. How revoltingly ineffectual he was; like a woman. Was it his being so ineffectual that made him, for all his affectation of insolence, so obsequious? She thought of her husband and wished he would come home.

She rose. "Please, go." And playfully, but firmly she pushed at him with her little, doubled fist.

"Yes, I'll go."

He still stood uncertainly.

Then, abruptly the smile vanished. His eyes grew narrower and denser

than she had ever seen them. "But not quite according to your plan."

He had her by the shoulders. His grip was surprisingly sinewy. His face was just above hers now, the thin pale lips threatening her mouth. Her eyes never left them, but riveted on them like a horror-stricken bird's. Her whole body grew rigid with loathing. That they should ever touch her became to her the most horrible thing that could happen in her life.

Just then a step sounded in the room and she was released.

"Fred," she groaned.

Her husband was standing near the large center table. He had been in the room some seconds then, since he had had time to walk to the table from the door. How odd he looked!

"I beg pardon; I seemed to have interrupted." And he strode off into the library in the same moment that Weber slipped into the hall, where she heard him groping about for his coat and hat.

When the front door had finally closed she felt better. She studied the library door critically. She expected that in a few moments her husband would come out to her. After all there was nothing to be solemn about. It was *she*, if anyone, who was deserving of sympathy . . . When a half hour and then an hour passed she crossed the room with quick nervous steps, and tried the handle of the door through which he had disappeared. It was unlocked. In response to her push it swung inward.

He was sitting at his desk, some papers spread out in front of him and his head supported on his left hand in the fashion in which he cupped it when he worked. At her entrance he glanced up.

"What do you want?" he inquired.

Then, as she simply stood, without answering, he rose and placed a chair for her.

She sat down in it perfunctorily.

"Fred, I want to explain. It was all such a silly mistake. You don't understand."

"I understand perfectly." He went back to his original place and for several moments no word was spoken. She

studied his face, which was composed and inscrutable.

When she could bear it no longer she lunged again. "Won't you say something? Tell me at least what you are thinking, feeling?"

"I'm not as interested in thoughts and feelings as you are. Nor do I feel the same compulsion to be always dissecting them."

It was the first time she had ever heard that precise, contemptuous note in his voice. She felt her body commencing to throb.

"You are angry with me?"

"No, I'm not in the least angry. Why do we have to discuss this thing, tonight?"

"Fred, you're so mistaken. What I told you a week ago is true. I *loathe* Mayer Weber."

"I imagine you do."

She took courage from this to go on, most convulsively. "Absolutely nothing occurred. You thought probably that we were flirting. But we weren't. I had even asked him to go. And then he tried to kiss me. But he didn't kiss me."

At this Hunter swung slowly around in his chair and let his quiet eyes rest on her. "No, I suppose not. Not while you could avoid it."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, the tactics of that kind of business is to get as near the danger line as possible, isn't it, and to remain yourself as virtuous and inviolate as ever? The same principle as the movies!"

"Fred!"

"Well, don't you agree that your policy is rather a dog-in-the-manger one?"

"Dog-in-the-manger?"

He was leaning back against his desk with his hands pressed hard against the edges of it. She could only stare at him with a stiff, crude intensity. He had never seemed so remote to her, nor so attractive.

"Come, Gail, let's be honest with each other. None of this is your fault. I'm not blaming you for anything. I only blame myself that I've been so slow to

admit what you've been so conscientiously trying to prove to me for several years."

"And that is—"

"That you're simply a sensationist—understanding, in regard to any emotion, nothing but its most commonplace surface expressions . . . Now, won't you please go away and let me work?"

This was the exact inflection she had used to Weber, an hour or so back, almost the same words. Could it be possible that in the last hour she had become loathsome to her husband in the same manner.

"Fred, don't you believe I love *you*?"

His big hands were in his lap now. He sat looking at them soberly. "What I believe is that you aren't capable of *loving* . . ."

She rose and left the room.

IV

THAT night she slept alone for the first time in the five years of her married life.

As she lay in the wide bed trying to sleep, and feeling very small and cold, there sprang into her mind one of her sister's few succinct observations, to which she had paid very little heed at the time. Something about a human emotion being so sensitive that if you merely touched it, you might bruise it so that it died. Did Lucy then know more than she did, for all her childish, literal outlook? . . . For, after all, Fred *had* loved her.

It was singular that in the first moment of really feeling sure of this, she was sure, also, of having killed it.



Survival

By Muna Lee

There would be no this year's flower there
If we went back;
They have ploughed the anemones and bluets under,
Wheat grows down to the track.

The stream is widened and damned across,
There's a house on the hill.
There is nothing left of the spring we found there,
Wild and still.

It is all changed as you and I,
Changed and torn away—
But cool and fragrant and fresh as rain
Is the song I made that day!



A MAN never marries a woman with whom he can converse on a serious topic for over ten minutes.

As Water Spilled on the Ground

By Virginia Terhune Van de Water

I

WINIFRED KENT had often talked to her son about marriage. This evening she renewed the subject, giving it what she hoped was a tactful personal turn.

She believed in marriage as a woman does who has been a happy wife. She had been as nearly perfectly happy as it is possible for mortals to be.

"In spite of the agony of losing and missing, you still hold that it is better to have loved and lost than not to have loved?" Dick had asked her this evening.

"Yes," she answered decidedly. "I had over twenty years of marriage. I have had five years of widowhood,—but through these last years I have had sweet memories to live upon."

"I call memories cold comfort," was the gloomy comment.

"But I have had *you*, too, dear," the woman said.

As the son made no reply, the mother looked at him solicitously. He was becoming morbid, she reflected. But she did not say it. A tendency to look on the dark side of life had grown upon Dick during the past few months. She could not understand his mental attitude,—unless he was in love.

The pair were sitting in the living-room of their little apartment. The glow from a pink-shaded reading lamp made the room look warm. The night was bitter cold and Dick had touched a match to the gas-logs as he and his mother entered the room after dinner.

"This is a poor substitute for an open fire," he had remarked, "but it is better than nothing. And if you do not look at

the flames too closely, and if you have a good imagination, you can almost fancy you are in front of a real fireplace."

Then he had drawn his mother's favourite chair up to the apology for a hearth, and had seated himself on a cushion at her feet.

The pair had spent many an evening thus, discussing various matters. For they were great chums, this mother and her only child. She was the kind of woman that men love. She was essentially feminine. Not weakly,—but gently, appealingly feminine.

She had married at eighteen. Now at forty-eight she looked ten years less than her age. Her light hair did not show the few gray strands scattered through it. Her eyes were dark and soft, her skin fair, her hands small and shapely.

She was the type of woman one seldom meets in these days of equal rights and equal responsibilities. She had always been taken care of. She had gone from her father's home to her husband, and when Richard Kent, Senior, after living right up to his comfortable income, died at fifty of heart disease, Richard Junior took up the burden which the husband had laid down.

Not that either man ever considered it a burden. Richard Kent had loved his wife with an absorbing affection and she had returned his devotion. It was his pride to provide her with such luxuries as his purse permitted. His only regret was that he could not surround her with all the beauties he felt she deserved. But he did what he could.

Because he did all that he could, and because he did not know he had a weak

heart, he died so suddenly that he was spared the anguish of appreciating that he was leaving his wife unprovided for. Had he comprehended the truth, the thought of his son would have been his only comfort. For Dick could be trusted to look out for his mother.

He had looked out for her as tenderly and devotedly as even his father could have wished. The son had a good position and the mother welcomed eagerly his suggestion that he and she move into a smaller and less expensive apartment than that in which they had lived until her husband's death.

"You see," Dick explained, "while I have a fair income for a chap of my years, it is not what Dad's was, by a long sight. But I am thankful and proud that it is enough to enable me to shield you and support you, dear little mother. Perhaps some day I may be prosperous enough to give you such a home as this."

She had put her arms about his neck and laid her head on his shoulder.

"I am glad to move," she said tremulously. "I could not endure living here without—him."

She had tried to hide her tears, but her son saw them and kissed them away.

His heart ached with pity for her. He understood so well what she had lost, for he knew what a husband his father had been.

His parents had married for love,—and their love had increased with each year they were together. Had the son not seen all this for himself, what his mother had told him would have given him a high ideal of marriage. From the time he was a mere lad she had told him that a loveless marriage was a sin. Now that his father was gone, she spoke of him as a girl would speak of her lover.

Dick Kent had lofty standards,—all of them, he declared, the outcome of his mother's teachings. She had been his confidante.

Until lately. To-night, sitting beside him in front of the blazing gas-logs, she appreciated, with a shudder of appre-

hension, that for weeks past the lad had been not only morbid, but reticent.

There was some reason for this. Was he in love?

That she loved him better than herself was proved by the fact that in asking this question she did not consider that his affection for another woman might come between him and her.

"Darling," she said, stroking the curly head at her knee, "I wish I could make you happy always."

He caught her hand and pressed it to his lips, and she felt his deep sigh.

"Even you could not do that," he rejoined. "Unfortunately, nobody can make another happy, no matter how much one may long to."

"I don't agree with you," she differed. "A husband can make his wife happy,—a wife can make her husband happy."

"Not always," he insisted. "You judge of marriage from your own experience. There are other kinds than yours."

"I know there are, dear," she admitted. "But I hope yours will not be that kind,—when you do find the right girl."

"It wouldn't do much good to find her," he muttered.

Then she summoned all her courage to say what was in her heart.

"Perhaps you have met her, darling."

He laughed, but the laugh did not ring true, and the mother heard the false note.

"It's a mistake nowadays for a man with a moderate income to meet the girl he would like to marry," he remarked. "It costs too much to keep a wife."

"Any woman who loved you would be willing to marry you on your present income," the mother argued. "You have more than your father and I had when we began our wedded life."

"Times were different then," he reminded her.

"Yes,—but we had a much smaller income than yours. Dear, you have an exaggerated idea of what a girl would expect. She would certainly be willing

to begin on the same scale on which we are now living."

There was a long silence before the man spoke. "Well, it can't be,—so let's not talk about it."

But the mother could not let the matter drop here. She knew now that she had been right in suspecting that her son was in love. And he was unhappy too. She had always been able to help him bear his troubles. She must help him now.

"Dick," lifting his head from her knee with tender firmness and turning his face so that she could look into his eyes,—“tell your old mother all about it.”

His avoidance of her direct gaze confirmed her in her suspicions.

"Dick," she accused, "you are in love, —and you have tried to keep me from finding it out. Did you fancy I would mind? Why, Son, I am glad for you."

He jerked his head away, and stood up.

"You needn't be glad for me," he said almost roughly. "Nothing will come of it."

"She does not love you?" she exclaimed. "I cannot believe it!"

In spite of his depression, the young man laughed.

"Mother, dear, you speak as if not to love me would be absolutely impossible," he teased. "You forget that all the world does not see me with your eyes."

She smiled at his badinage, then grew sober. "But, dear lad, even if she does not love you now, she will learn to. And," tentatively, "if it is the girl I think, she cares for you already,—unless I am not a good reader of feminine nature."

"Don't!" the exclamation was almost sharp. "What's the good of talking about all this, Mother? I cannot marry for years to come, unless," with a disdainful curl of the lip, "I marry money."

Winifred Kent raised a protesting hand.

"Please don't jest about that kind of thing," she begged. "You know what I think of marrying for money."

"I was only joking," he declared. "Why take it seriously?"

"Because I feel so strongly about it," she explained. "But there is no need to repeat my views on that subject. You know them already."

"Yes, dear, I do," he said. "Because I do know those views, and because I agree with them entirely, there is no danger of my marrying a woman I do not love. And, with my present income, there is no chance of my marrying at all. Now, let us change the subject."

II

SHE understood her son too well to pursue the topic. When he took that tone, it meant that he had reached a decision from which he would not be shaken.

He went out soon after this. She wondered if he were going to call on Ruth Bartlett. For she was the girl she had in mind in talking to Dick.

She was a pretty creature, and Winifred had always admired her, while she had stood a little bit in awe of her,—for she was a very capable young person. She had just been graduated from Barnard College, and she and Dick had been good friends for several years.

Ruth Bartlett was not the kind of girl to accept a man's attentions if she did not like him. Of late, when Mrs. Kent had been in company with the pair, she had fancied she detected in the girl a consciousness of Richard's presence, a gentleness towards him that had heretofore been lacking. Was her heart at last touched?

The mother did not find it hard to answer that question in the affirmative. Her son had not been far wrong when he had suggested that she could not believe that a girl could resist falling in love with him.

Then why might he not marry? Ruth was too sensible a person to expect to live luxuriously for the first few years after her marriage. Nor had she been in the habit of living luxuriously in her own home. Her people were in fairly comfortable circumstances. They were

not rich enough to spoil their daughter. Winifred was glad that this was the case.

There was a mistake somewhere. If so, it must be righted. Dick's happiness was at stake. She must think this thing out and try to rectify it.

She had not been accustomed to taking the initiative. She had always been a dependent sort of woman. But her mother-love was stronger than her diffidence.

Yet when, five minutes later, there was a ring at the doorbell and Frank Ogilvie was announced, she felt a sudden throb of relief. Here was an old friend, one to whom she could confide a part of the solicitude she felt with regard to Dick, one who could be trusted to keep her confidence. She was sure of Frank Ogilvie.

He had been in love with her for years. She had taken his devotion for granted when she was a girl. He was a dozen years older than she, and even after she had told him of her engagement to Richard Kent, he had remained her very good friend.

At the time of Richard's death Ogilvie had begged her to turn to him if there was any way in which he could help her. But he had not told her again of his undiminished love for her until three years later. Then he reminded her gently that his devotion to her had never wavered.

"You will always be the only woman in the world for me, Winifred," he had said. "I know you can never love me as you loved Richard. But won't you marry me?"

She had shrunk from him.

"Oh, no!" she had exclaimed. "A loveless marriage is a sin! If I married you without loving you, I would hate you. And a woman can only love once as I have loved."

Then she had broken down and sobbed, and he had asked her forgiveness. He had not meant to hurt her. It was not only his love that had prompted him to urge her to marry him,—although that had been strong enough to make him run any risk to

win her. But he knew he could supply her material needs and make her comfortable through the remainder of her days.

She had dried her tears when he said this, and her face had flushed.

"You mean to suggest," she asked indignantly, "that I would marry you because you happen to be rich?"

"No, no," he protested. "I do not mean that at all! I only mean that it troubles me to see you doing without things that I could give you, if I only had the right to."

That had been two years ago. He had not renewed the subject since then. But he had always been at her service.

So it was almost eagerly that she greeted him as he entered the room to-night.

"Oh, Frank," she said, "I am glad you have come! Sit down here,—for I want to talk to you confidentially."

He did as she bade him and listened gravely to her story, nodding occasionally as she made some point she wished to emphasize particularly.

He did not interrupt her recital, but sat back, his eyes fixed upon the woman whom he had loved so long.

Even in the shaded and uncertain light, Frank Ogilvie looked his sixty years. He had spent most of his life earning money. He was, however, a lonely man. One may spend money upon one's friends, and give liberally to Charity and Causes, but these do not take the place of wife and children. They do not keep a man young.

Had Winifred married him he could have made her happy, he mused now as he gave one-half of his attention to her while the other half of his mind was busy with himself and his disappointments. How pretty she was! And, with a half-smile,—how deliciously inconsequent!

For it was evident that she had not yet grasped the true reason why her boy could not marry. Must he tell her in plain English that her son could not afford to support both a wife and a mother?

Ogilvie drew his brows together at

the thought of thus hurting her. Yet he must say something.

For she had come to the end of her recital and was looking at him expectantly.

"Well?" she asked at last. "What do you think? Move so that I can see your face. That's better. Now tell me honestly,—don't you think that Dick's viewpoint is wrong? Don't you think that he is making enough to marry on?"

The man cleared his throat.

"Well,—that depends," he said lamely.

She looked disappointed. "But, Frank, surely what is good enough for a man's mother, is good enough for his wife."

"I agree with you entirely," he said promptly. "But perhaps he feels that all this,"—with a wave of his hand about the little living-room,—"*is not really good enough for you, although it is the best he can do.*"

"It is lovely!" she declared. "Any mother ought to be glad to live as Dick and I do."

There was an awkward silence.

The woman turned impulsively to her companion.

"Frank," she demanded, "what are you thinking? I asked for your honest opinion. What is it?"

He hesitated.

"I would rather not give it," he demurred.

"I insist."

"Even if it hurts you?"

"Hurts me?" she asked quickly. Then, a light of comprehension dawning in her eyes,—"*you mean that—that—because of me*"—

Ogilvie nodded.

"I mean," he began, but she interrupted him.

"You mean that I cost Dick so much that he—that he—can't marry?"

Again he nodded. He could not speak.

"But you do not understand," she hurried on. "I am the most economical housekeeper. I keep right within the allowance Dick gives me. And as to clothes,—why,—you do not know how

little I spend for clothes. I really don't cost Dick much."

The man sprang to his feet. He longed to gather her in his arms.

"For Heaven's sake," he said hoarsely. "Don't talk like that! I cannot stand it!"

"Your son loves you. He counts it an honour to care for you. He always has. You have made him perfectly happy. Be content with that. Nobody else could have done for him what you have done."

"But," she said slowly, "it is I who am in the way of his marrying. Oh," with a catch in her breath, "I see it all now! How blind I have been. I have been a fool. I have taken all and given nothing. Richard,—my husband,—did everything for me, and I received it as my due. That was all right, for I was his wife, and a man should care for his wife. But my boy, my little laddie,—to think that I have hung like a burden about his neck,—just as I hung about my father's neck, I suppose, until I married."

"You see," she went on in spite of his effort to check her, "that was the way I was brought up. My mother and father had old-fashioned notions about girls. They never taught me to earn my living. Perhaps if I had not married when I was so young I might have had enough sense to learn to do something. As it was, Father handed me right over to Richard,—and he—he—left me to Dick! Oh, it's horrible!"

She was walking up and down the room now. Frank Ogilvie stepped in front of her.

"Dear," he begged, "do not talk like this. Why, child, you are making a mountain of a mole-hill. Come here and sit down and let me talk to you."

She allowed him to lead her back to her chair, and he sat down near her.

"Now listen,—you are possessed by an idea and have let it run away with your common sense," he said sternly. "In the first place, you do not know that Dick is in love."

"Yes, I do!" she affirmed. "I know my boy, I tell you. I have seen for

weeks that he was unhappy. Then all at once this evening I understood why."

"Well, and if he is,—what then? He may be unhappy because the girl does not love him."

"I am very sure she does love him," the mother muttered.

"But you do not *know*," the man protested. "And until you do, how foolish of you to get all wrought up over a condition that may not exist at all."

"But if it does?" she demanded.

"Well, if it does,—it may be that we are all wrong in imagining that Dick's income is not large enough—"

"But it is not!" she exclaimed. "He has talked of his business affairs to me. I mean he has told me just what he is able to pay for things. We live awfully close to what he makes. And I have taken it all for granted."

Again he checked her.

"Hold on! Steady!" he warned. "Don't let yourself go again."

"I must think it out," she pleaded. "I will admit that, as you suggest, I may be mistaken about the girl's love for Dick. But, supposing that it is all true,—that he loves her, and she loves him, and they cannot afford to marry? Can't you see that I must do something?"

He did not reply, and she went on as if talking to herself.

"There ought to be some sort of work by which I could support myself. I might—"

"As if Dick would allow it!" the man broke in brusquely. "He would be a blackguard if he did,—and he is not that."

"No,—he is a hero, a martyr!" she retorted. "Oh, why am I not old enough for an old ladies' home!"

"Winifred!" the man caught her hands in his. "You are torturing me, talking like this! Dear, I promised never to annoy you again,—but can't you see how I want you? Come to me, —and make me the happiest man in the world."

She flung his hands away.

"Stop!" she commanded. "I have not yet sunk so low that I would marry

a man for his money! I don't love you. I never can love you."

"But you like me," he pleaded. "I am satisfied with that. I will be very good to you, Winifred."

"Stop!" she ordered again. "I want to be alone. I must do something. I don't know what. You certainly have not helped me by any suggestion. I almost wish I had never told you this thing. And yet—what could I do?"

"Yes," he said gently, his manner changing suddenly, "what could you do? Forgive me if I have wounded you, dear. I was very tactless. My only excuse is that I love you. But I will not bother you with that. I will go away now. Good-night!"

He had reached the door when he looked back. Her slight drooping figure smote his heart. He returned to her side.

"Winifred," he said, "I have asked you to forgive me. But there is one thing more I must ask. It is this: If you want me,—if you ever need me,—will you try to remember then how much I love you? Will you promise?"

She looked at him for an instant, then her eyes fell.

"Yes," she murmured. "I promise."

III

SHE was lying awake in her darkened room when Dick came in two hours later. She spoke as he passed her door. She had determined upon what course to pursue if her suspicions were correct. But first she would make sure. She must be careful and tactful.

"Dick!" she called. "Come in and tell me good-night."

He did her bidding, groping across her room towards the bed.

"Do not turn on the light," she warned, "it hurts my eyes."

He sat on the edge of her bed and bent to kiss her.

"Where have you been?" she questioned with elaborate indifference.

"To the Bartletts'." He, too, tried to make his tone casual, but succeeded as poorly as she had done.

"Was Ruth in?" she asked.

"Yes, she was in," he replied. "Good-night, little Mother. It's bed for mine. I'm as sleepy as a cat."

She held his head close, with her arms about his neck, when she had kissed him.

"Good-night, darling," she murmured. "Mother prays you may be happy."

Unconsciously she used the phraseology that she had used when he was a little boy and she was soothing him in childish troubles. She heard him swallow hard before answering.

"Thanks, Mother. But I guess that happiness is not the only essential to life."

"It is one of the essentials if it makes somebody else happy too," she retorted. "However, you must go to bed now, and to sleep too."

She lay still until the darkening of the transom in the room beyond her own told her that he had extinguished his light. After ten minutes, she crept softly across the passage between the two rooms and listened at the door.

She stood here so long that she was chilled through and her teeth chattered. But at last she heard the man move restlessly in his bed.

"Oh, Lord!" he muttered so loudly that the exclamation reached her ears. "Oh, Lord!"

She hurried back to bed and lay there shivering.

"I knew it! I knew it!" she said over and over.

Her fears were confirmed when, an hour later, she saw the transom of Dick's room illumined. Then she got up, and, donning her wrapper and slippers, went boldly across the passage and knocked at his door.

"Come in!" he called.

"I saw your light and wondered if you were not feeling well," she explained. "Can't you sleep, Son?"

"No, I can't, and I thought I would try to read until I got drowsy," he explained.

She did not remind him that he had said a while ago that he was sleepy.

But she came to his bedside and laid a caressing hand on his forehead.

"That was how your father used to put himself to sleep," she remarked. "You are worrying about something, Dick."

"No," he denied, "at least,—I have been thinking about business. But there's nothing to worry about, Mother,—so please do stop fussing!"

His tone was impatient. He was seldom cross with her. And he did not often acknowledge that he was worried about anything. It was plain that she had caught him off his guard.

"All right, dear," she said. "I won't bother you."

Then she went back to her room and spent the remainder of the night deciding upon a course of action.

It was late the next afternoon that Winifred Kent called upon Mrs. Bartlett. She had owed her a call for some time, and would not have troubled herself to return it even now if to do this had not been a part of her scheme.

Mrs. Bartlett was out, the servant said, but Miss Bartlett was in.

"You will excuse me for asking for you, won't you, my dear?" Mrs. Kent said when Ruth came into the drawing-room. "I know it is expecting a good deal of you to come down to see an old lady,"—with her light laugh,—"but when I learned that your mother was out, and you in, I could not resist temptation."

The girl yielded to the gentle charm of voice and bearing and expressed herself as happy to see the caller.

Ruth Bartlett's face was pale and her eyes heavy. When Mrs. Kent commented on the fact that she looked tired, she admitted that she had not slept well last night. Then she flushed as she met the widow's kind gaze, and the tears came to her eyes.

Ruth Bartlett prided herself upon her self-control. Yet when, after a long chat, Winifred Kent took her departure, she had learned what she had come to ascertain,—that Ruth loved Dick. But the girl did not know that she had revealed this by her

manner and reticences just as plainly as she might have done by speech.

A week later Winifred Kent told her son that she was going to marry Frank Ogilvie. She made this confession in the darkness of her own room, where she had summoned Dick when dinner was over. She could not see the look on his face, nor could he see that her hands were clasped tightly together.

He listened to what she had to say, but made no comment. When she could stand his silence no longer, she added what sounded almost like a plea for mercy.

"You see he has loved me for a long while, Dick. And he is no longer young. Neither am I. He needs me. You do not need me now."

He spoke stiffly, as if putting a great restraint upon himself.

"I have needed you very much, mother. But I do not want to put my claim before his."

She drew in her breath as if he had stabbed her.

"Nobody has any claim before yours, son," she said tremulously. "You will always come first."

"Until your marriage," he corrected. "However—" and she could fancy the proud lift of his head, "there is no use in discussing that. I hope,"—with an effort—"that you will be very happy."

Then he kissed her on the forehead and started from the room.

"You are going out?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied. "I am going over to the Bartletts' for a while."

"Give Ruth my love," she said softly.

She did not know whether or not he heard her, for he made no reply.

IV

A MONTH passed before he announced to his mother his engagement to Ruth Bartlett. He tried to appear grateful as Winifred expressed her delight at the news. Ruth, too, was grateful and deferential when Mrs. Kent

called to welcome her into the small family of which she was to be a part.

"She is a lovely girl," she said later to Dick. "I have always thought her pretty, but her happiness has made her beautiful. You have won a prize, my darling."

"I am glad you like her," he rejoined. "I would be sorry if my mother and future wife were not on friendly terms."

Friendly terms! The words were perfectly proper, and just what convention would have demanded. But Winifred's son and she had always been intimate. Now there was a barrier between them,—a thin barrier,—but the parent could not break it down.

There was nothing that she could lay hold of. She appreciated this as Dick rose to greet Frank Ogilvie, who entered the room for his evening call. Ogilvie came at the same hour every evening, and Dick always greeted him politely, with just the correct shade of cordiality. Then he made his adieus and went over to the Bartletts'.

When he had gone on this special evening, Winifred Kent voiced a little of what was in her mind.

"I do not quite understand Dick," she said. "I know he is happy, yet he is so different from what he used to be."

"He is engaged," was her betrothed's prompt rejoinder. "When a young chap falls in love, he has room for nobody else in his heart. Nor," with a smile, "has an old fellow like me room for anybody else. But, you know, dearest, there has never been anyone but you in my heart."

She did not return his caress, but submitted to it. She had schooled herself to do this.

During the three months that elapsed between Winifred Kent's engagement to Frank Ogilvie and her marriage to him, her son's manner to her was studiously polite, and conventionally affectionate. There was nothing that the mother could resent,

yet at times she felt that she must break down this invisible barrier between them or lose her mind. She had sacrificed so much to make him happy, and in doing so seemed to have placed herself at a distance from him. She could not tell him the truth, but surely the son who had been dearer than life itself to her must understand in some subtle way how deeply she loved him.

On the night before her marriage she made a stern resolve. She would have a plain talk with her boy. She had told Ogilvie not to come to her on this her last evening in the little home that she and Dick had shared. And her betrothed, always willing to do her bidding, had yielded to her wishes.

Thus it came about that she and her son were again alone together in the little living-room.

It was early Spring now, but the air had a chill in it that, she declared, warranted the lighting of the gas-lights on the imitation hearth.

When Dick had touched a match to them, she sank into her armchair and laid a cushion at her feet, as had been her habit in the old days.

"Sit here, dear," she urged, motioning to the spot which had so often been his resting-place.

He hesitated for the fraction of a second, then obeyed. She laid a caressing hand on his head.

"It is like old times to be here alone with you, dear," she said fondly.

She hoped that he did not notice how cold her fingers were nor how they trembled.

"Yes," he said sombrely, "it is like old times."

The opportunity that she had sought had come more quickly than she had dared to hope. She had feared there would be long preliminaries before she would have a chance to speak of that which was harassing her.

"Darling," trying to steady her voice, "what is the matter?"

"What do you mean?" he parried.

"You know what I mean," she

went on, her voice growing stronger. "For months past there has been something wrong."

"Have I not seemed happy?" he demanded. "If not, my actions do not betray my feelings. For I could never have believed that a man could be as happy in his engagement as I have been."

He was fencing, and she knew it. She could not stand this evasion.

"Dick," she said almost sternly, "I am not talking of your relations with Ruth, but of your feeling with regard to me. Do not make me remind you how close you and I have always been. I do not fancy that you have forgotten. I know I never can. Ever since your father,"—she paused a moment, for she felt her voice breaking, then she went on more firmly,— "ever since your father left me you have been everything to me. There never was a better, more unselfish son."

"I only did what it was my pleasure and duty to do," he said.

"But you did it so nobly, so generously. And you would have been willing to sacrifice your entire life for me."

"I never had the opportunity," he rejoined. "And if I had had, it would have been an honor to be allowed to do it. To sacrifice one's self may seem hard to the outsider. But to the man who does it, it must bring a wonderful sense of duty performed. The intolerable thing would be for a man to know that someone else was being sacrificed to bring him happiness. I would rather die than feel that."

"And yet," she broke in, "you just said you would have been glad to put me in that position,—to let me be the one to whom you made sacrifices."

"Ah," he argued, "that is different. You are my mother. It would have been my joy, as well as my privilege, to care for you. For, since you are speaking of what used to be,—I may remind you that you and I have been pretty close chums."

"Yes," she seized eagerly on his words,—“until lately, Dick. Oh, son, what has come between us? Please, if you love me, tell me the truth.”

"You really want it, mother?"

"I really want it."

"I hate to say it," he began slowly, "but you insist. It makes me feel like a brute,—in a way. Yet the fault is not mine.

"You say that if I love you I must tell you the truth. I do love you. You know that."

"But not as you did?" Her question was scarcely more than a whisper.

He did not look up at her strained face, but kept his eyes fixed on the flickering gas-flames.

"I love you," he went on, "but, you know, mother, certain things have happened to my ideals. You want me to be frank, you know."

He paused.

"I do want you to be frank," she said. "Go on."

"Well, ever since I can remember anything I can remember the tenderness that existed between you and father. As I grew up, and went to other boys' homes, I realized that such love as yours and his was one of the most wonderful things in the world,—in fact, *the* most wonderful. You taught me that by your life and by your speech. I learned for myself what a man father was,—the best man, I really believe, who ever lived. And you always told me he was."

"He was," she agreed.

"You also told me," more slowly, as if it pained him to wound her, "that people who loved as you and he did could never love like that a second time. You also taught me that a marriage without that kind of love was a sin."

He stopped, but she did not speak.

"Can't you see, mother," he urged, "that I have had to readjust all my views? Until this past winter I thought of you as still married to my father, still loving him, only waiting until you could be with him in some

other world, where you felt he still lived."

Again he paused.

"You did feel that, didn't you, mother?" he questioned.

"Yes."

"So it hurt me, horribly, to have you put someone else in my father's place. I know," he hurried on, "that Ogilvie is a good man,—as men go. But you must forgive me if I say that he could never be such a man as my father was,—no, not if he lived a thousand years. "Oh,"—desperately,—“you have driven me to speaking the truth! I am saying that which you may resent."

"No," she said dully, "I do not resent it,—for it is true."

"You admit it!" he exclaimed, and there was a note of relief in his voice. "You do not love him as you did father?"

"Dick, Dick," she stammered, "no woman ever loves twice—"

"Then, in heaven's name," he exclaimed, springing to his feet, "why do you marry him? But no!" with a passionate gesture,—“don't answer! I do not want to hear you say that you are marrying him because he could provide you with certain things that I could not supply. I could not stand hearing that,—from you!"

"Dick!" she begged, rising and putting her arms about his neck, "dear son,—please forgive me! You do not understand."

He looked sternly into her eyes.

"You are going to marry him tomorrow!" he accused.

She bowed her head mutely. He drew away from her.

"Don't you see what a mistake it has been for us to talk of this, mother? Ruth and I have puzzled over it,—for of course I talk to her of all that lies closest to my heart."

Winifred Kent threw out her arms as if warding off a blow.

"You—you have discussed it with—Ruth?" she breathed.

"Why, yes, mother, of course I

have. You see she is all that really belongs to me now,—or that will belong to me after tomorrow.”

The woman shivered slightly.

“Son,” laying her hand timidly on his arm, “I am sorry I have disappointed you.”

“Never mind, mother,” he said, in a voice that he meant to make kind, “you have a right to live your life as you think best. And, you know, I have Ruth.

“But,” with a glance at the clock, “I must go to her now. She will be wondering what is keeping me so late. It is a pity, dear, that you insisted on this conversation tonight. It was a mistake. It gets us nowhere. For I cannot understand, and”—

looking at her keenly—“I suppose you cannot explain.”

“No,” she murmured, “I cannot explain.”

He kissed her and left her standing alone in front of the imitation hearth-fire.

She stood listening until she heard the front door close behind him. Then, with a low moan, she sank into a great chair and buried her face in her hands.

For a long time she sat motionless. When at last she raised her head, her face was the face of an old woman.

For she knew now the bitterest pain of her life,—the pain of a woman who has sacrificed a dear ideal and lost her only son.



Friendship

By T. F. Mitchell

I WILL always have a deep regard for Smith. It was Smith who was the cause of my happiest experience; it was Smith who introduced me to the most beautiful and most likable woman I have ever loved. One evening he said: “Meet Mrs. Smith, Bill.”



A WOMAN of forty can forgive a young girl almost anything but the offer of a seat in the subway



WE who have never plotted revolutions must look to women for our ecstatic moments.



CUT your friends from the hickory and your sweetheart from the rosebush.



On the Sixth Day

By Tom Ransford

GOD created a creature, beautiful, strong, and terrible, and He called it "man."

And He asked His creature: "Art thou satisfied?"

But the creature answered: "No!"

Then God asked: "What is it thou dost want?"

And the creature said: "I want a mirror to reflect my glory, a potion to fire my blood, a casket to receive my gifts, a pillow to rest upon when I am tired, a veil to hide behind when I am miserable, a puppet to play with, an idol to pray to, a muse to inspire me, a beacon to show the way—and a victim on whom to blame all my shortcomings . . ."

Then God created woman.



The King

By Harold Cook

THREE score and ten kings
Stalking down the Strand,
In royal robes they were arrayed,
A sceptre in each hand.

Three score and ten kings
Walked London clean through,
Stirred men's hearts in Kensington
On their way to Kew.

People say they saw the kings
Walking in their pride—
I remember only two.
Myself, and One beside.



Sheep-Face II

By Stephen Ta Van

I

LA *belle Fleurette est parti.*

She left me as I had expected, without the courtesy of a farewell word, and all my care was insufficient to avert flashes of the ill-temper which, lurking beneath the smooth exterior of the complete sheep-face, leaps out unreasoningly to transform the lovely features into those of a hag. True, she did not deal so harshly with a temporary financial blight of mine as the opportunity allowed, or extol to the point of nausea the attractiveness and assets of other men; but there were innumerable crass acts and barbed speeches, of the kind that occur readily to a weak nature grown impatient of a bond. Her exit was made on the penultimate step of exasperation. I am grateful that she hurdled the last step, sparing me a scene with a taint.

Enfin, elle est parti, la belle Fleurette.

The girl and the event are American—New York of the New Yorkers—but the thought of the departure comes to me naturally in the fluent French, which I write even more inaccurately than I speak. Just as certain sounds seem to me to connote certain qualities arbitrarily—as the word sheep-face connotes the type of woman to which *Fleurette* belongs—so does one language, rather than another, carry a thought of which there can be no adequate translation. One cannot translate effectively the poetry of any language, whether it be Dante or the nursery rhyme “Malbrouck,” or such a word as “Ach-

tung,” or the phrase “C’est inferieur,” or Homeric hexameters, or the Gallic irony of Frederic Masson anent the peccadilloes of the great Duke of Wellington. One may achieve near-equivalent, but the true significance escapes with the sound.

Thus the French “*est parti*” conveys to me an element of finality which is lacking from the English “has gone.” I heard the girls of Tours chant it in 1918 like a pæan—“*Le major Veecks est parti, parti, parti!*”—up and down the Rue Nationale and the long Avenue de Grammont, on the bacchic spring evening when the over-stringent provost marshal was exiled to Marseilles. Simone of St. Symphorien said it in a voice of prophecy, wrung dry of tears, when her lieutenant went to the front in May; she did not dance her wedding-minuet, and the largest rose in her bouquet, that she promised to give to me, remains a dream-flower. It came with apparent stoicism from the wide lips of Madame Lefevre, of the *pension bourgeois*, when one asked for her man, who had been at home on permission. So often was it spoken that it became a conventional final curtain for individual acts of the stupendous commingling of tragedy and farce that made up the history of the period. It remains for me a cross between a shrug and a requiem, with a suggestion of a closed door, behind which may be either tears or laughter.

The curtain is down forever on *Fleurette*’s act with me. The team has disbanded definitely—this time, *Fleurette* will not return. In her, two

sheep-face characteristics are especially strong: utter indifference following passion, and obstinacy masquerading as pride. She is nearly incapable of affection. In the matter of obstinacy, she will endure suffering rather than allow herself to forgive a real or fancied slight, either by or against herself. Her mad marriage of three years ago was perpetrated in a fit of spite, and with opportunity, she would act as crazily again. I may have the privilege of telegraphing funds to relieve her urgent necessities—her necessities are always urgent—at some future time, but never again will she come, smiling, a little languid, to let me hold her in my arms, laugh at her treacheries, and give thanks for the glory of her nearly perfect beauty, and for the cold, fastidious egotism that has enabled her to keep her beauty unsullied through the vicissitudes into which her destiny and caprices have led her.

If I chance to see her, she will be with some man, a plethoric purchaser of women, perhaps, who will be able to drug her temporarily with the luxury she adores, and for whose subjugation she will employ the second cousins of the blandishments that once she used, almost spontaneously, on me.

She will come to that, I suppose; sheep-faces grow coarse as they grow older. If she could preserve the delicacy, the fastidiousness, of her present egotism she might be safe, but that she can do so is unlikely, for she has little of the strength and breeding that are necessary for the holding of a long course. She cannot be faithful to a man, an idea, or herself. Nature, giving her a medium in which to work, the medium of beauty, has limited her as an artist. Had she been a true artist, she would not have allowed anger and indifference to provoke her into so brutal a parting as ours.

In fact, the complete sheep-face is conspicuously weak in the matter of parting. It is the time when she is most at the mercy of her emotions;

she wishes to be off with the old love and perhaps on with the new—but at any rate, off with the old. She has a contempt for her lover, cannot understand how she could ever have been attracted by him. Hypocritically she has dallied with the inevitable, allowing a love affair to prolong itself beyond its natural life. There has been the stage of doubt, followed by the period of bickering; suddenly she decides to think not of the manner of her going, but go at once, regardless of friendship.

So it was with Fleurette's predecessors; they went too late when they did not go too early. Little Eve, the super-sheep-face, whose grace, in the season of love, was perfect as a young birch seen in a dream on the blue hillside of a fabled country—whose elusive tenderness was haunting as a dryad's, imagined beside a hidden forest pool—little Eve wove a web of ugly lies, before she went, that held cold and helpless the love I had for her, until it strangled. Of the lesser loves that followed her, Lucile became harridan, whose jealous descents were to be avoided as systematically as one eludes a dun; Enid, sixth alliterative daughter of the Pioneer, charged at me one evening for some trivial offence, and passed like a battalion of horse; and Hazel sent behind her a dropping fire of vituperative letters. I lost Una on a wild New Year's Eve, and the English girl died in June in fever-ridden Guiana. Saving-Face, the gypsy, who came to me through jealousy of her husband, really liked me only once—on that afternoon when, caught by a mood of restlessness, we roamed miles through autumn woods, spent the evening at an abandoned farmhouse, and returned after the strange adventure with the five wood mice. The remainder was the hopeless fanning of a dying flicker.

But running back along the list I find one name that evokes a more complicated memory: Louise Renault. To the essentials of the sheep-

face she added a keener intelligence and a life-feeling less crude. She was the most vivid woman I ever knew, and her personality, though emotionally fickle to the *n*th degree, was deep enough to include an abiding sense of art. Her parting from me, the only satisfying one that I remember, epitomized her.

II

THEY lived at the top of the ladder, she and Craig Renault, gaining and spending money with all four hands, working, playing, entertaining, bringing up excellently a pair of attractive children. At their house one might meet a senator, a bishop, a professor of chemistry, a literary lion, a tennis champion. Louise could talk, from bridge to Serbian folk-lore, and, with rarer skill, could listen superlatively. She understood to perfection the gentle art of gross flattery. I have seen her listen by the half-hour to a windy specialist, then sigh ecstatically and breathe:

"Oh, your wonderful brain!"

Invariably the great man swelled like a bladder, and I, who had watched the treatment a score of times, would do the same when it was applied to me. She had a way of getting admiration into her slanting eyes that male vanity could not resist. It was said that she could have done what she wished with the Wetherell millions, and undoubtedly her charm and her angular beauty, exotic as an Egyptian painting, did hold both Tony Wetherell and his stupid brother. But she was not that kind; much though she loved money, she would have denied the Emperor Aurungzebe unless he caught her fancy.

She paid the penalty for her brilliance with nervous reactions. Then the tall ladder toppled indeed, and she came down to an orgy of jangled nerves.

The scrawled line arrives by special messenger:

"Come to me, I need you. L."

Warned by experience, I go with deliberation, enter gingerly under guidance of a frightened but discreet maid, and see dimly on a couch in the darkened room a heap of drapery, from which limbs protrude at angles. No sound. Then:

"Come here!"

"What can I do for you, Louise?"

"Come here, I say!"

I move within reach, and am instantly folded in a savage embrace, which seems to be all bones. A repulse as abrupt.

"I wish I hadn't sent for you. You don't love me at all."

"My dearest, I assure you I love you beyond words. You're a little overwrought, that's all. Let me sit down quietly with you, and then tell me what the trouble is."

"You talk to me as though you were talking to one of your brainless women, your common sheep-faces. I hate you for it. You can go. I never want to see you again."

I start for the door, and nearly reach it.

"Steve! You're not really going to leave me like this?"

I return, and take her hand, which she immediately snatches away.

"I don't want you to touch me, I want you to sit down there, in that chair, and listen. Steve, life is too hard for me, I'm through with it."

"What, again?"

"Ah, no, Steve, it's final this time. Don't mock at me. Come here and hold me close, and let me tell you what we two are going to do."

I hold her, gathering close to me the slight figure, slender, almost, as a child's.

"There, my dear, say whatever you like."

"Listen: tonight, when the moon and the tide are high, and stupid people are asleep, you and I are going out into the beautiful, cool bay, and quietly disappear. Life's no more to you than it is to me—you too see the futility of it. Will you go with me?"

"I'll think about it."

"I don't want you to think about it. There's been too much thinking. I want you to do it for me without thinking. Will you, Steve?"

"Sorry. I have a dinner engagement tomorrow night, and no matter how futile life may be, a date's a date."

I am thrown from the side of the couch.

"Oh, God, he mocks at me! If you won't go with me, I'll go alone. I'll shoot myself."

I go to the gunrack and take down the Winchester.

"This will do the trick. A little awkward, but you can push the trigger with your toe, as the suicides do in the books."

A crash of hysteria.

"Listen, Louise, pull yourself together. You don't want to spread the news to the State."

"I don't care where I spread it! Craig'll be here in two hours, and I can't meet him like this, and you don't love me, and everything's wrong, and I want to die."

And two hours later, when Craig came, she would be a radiant vision, cool, potent mistress of herself and of the weekend situation. But what scenes! What scenes! I have shaken her, dosed her with liqueurs, wheedled, reviled, cajoled and made love to her in three languages, before the spark of the rally could be blown into flame. She always had the spark, but her maid was a wreck, and I a shaken reed, by the time the Renault motor-horn was heard. I used to slip out and return for dinner, and strive to be pleasant when she asked me why I looked so tired.

A strange creature. In a deep shadow of the August moonlight she exerted on me all the power of her softest mood, then suddenly dared me to leave her; and when I walked away she followed, pleading. If I had yielded and returned, she would never have looked at me again, for she despised the lovers whom she could rule.

There was a man in a Western madhouse, a sculptor, who had ruined himself for her, and at whose catastrophe she laughed with a sound as of dry branches broken. The melodramatic element of the incident had intrigued her, especially when the madman's friend visited her with reproaches, but she had grown tired of it, as of the man himself. To the listener, it was like something plucked from a movie, a story pasted together for the intellectual delight of morons, suddenly translated into life, and the more striking for its mask of grease paint. To Louise it was a discarded plume, which she took occasionally from her memory's drawer on rainy days, turning it this way and that against the background of a mood.

She loved Renault more than any other man, and believed that she made him happy. He was lean and tall and dark, with an olive skin—one of those men who look twenty-eight or fifty—and women followed him with their eyes. Apparently he never looked back, and his wife, with a clever woman's contempt for the power of deception of a known and rated male, believed him incapable of concealing a deviation or of fathoming hers. What he suspected one cannot know, but I always reckoned him a philosopher, and guess that he preferred not to betray his thoughts. Everything was done for him and he was master in his house. Why should he show his hand needlessly?

III

WHAT Louise thought of me I never learned. Can any man discover what a woman really thinks of him? The power that I had over her was in her inability to overcome me. She was aware, even in the most passionate moments, that I did not love her. The charm which conquered stronger men, rich and handsome men, merely intrigued me, and like most clever women, she desired to be adored rather than admired, yet scorned the adorer as a weakling.

Yes, that was it; she liked to break her toys if she could, and throw them away broken, and me she could not break. I had a kind of twisting stabbing wit, a little cheap but genuine, that pleased her. We used to spend idle hours honing our minds upon the passing populace.

There was one dusk when we were close together—almost friends. Some rare chance, a junction of moods, gave us a few moments of true sympathy. The day had gone and the night had not come. The scent of lilacs from the great bush beside the veranda lay faintly sweet on the air, and the twilight silence seemed a magic interlude between the screaming pibroch cry that is Youth, and the grinding creak of Age. I touched a fold of her sleeve with my fingers, and we were happy until a dog howled.

One night I left her, and meant to see her again the next week. The week passed, and another, and we did not meet. In a month I wrote her a letter, in which I said nothing and said it clumsily—the kind of letter that one has not the courage not to send. She replied by enclosing a blank sheet.

Her instinct, keener than mine, told her that we had no more to say or do together, we had reached a natural climax, and to continue would have been a descent. She preferred to stop before the weariness and revulsions inevitable in a waning love-affair could blur and weaken outlines.

Therefore a clear impression of her remains with me: a woman like a display of fireworks exploding prematurely. Yet she was ineffective only in relation to an ideal; compared with her friends, she accomplished marvels, and beside her the women who called her evil or frivolous seemed pallid and uninteresting. There was about her, despite her fits of pessimism, something valid, an aspiration, a pursuit of colour and form, while they—those women—shrank or pretended to shrink from anything flame-coloured. She loved music and sculpture and dancing, and courage and fierce passions and laughter, and was not ashamed. They, if they loved at

all, loved pale delights and hooded pleasures: gossip and large soft cake, and the grim conjugal debauch. It seems a pity that Virtue should occasionally cut so poor a figure beside the Vice which it condemns.

My memories of Louise are pleasant. I am in her debt for many an agreeable hour and some unique experiences. To know her was always an intellectual stimulant, and my admiration goes out to her particularly for the manner in which she dismissed me. There need be no humiliation in dismissal by a woman; all things end, and passion is especially ephemeral. When the relation grows cold, it is not a break that is immoral, but continuance. Persons who recognize a climax, and have the courage to act upon the recognition, are so few that one must bow to them. With my hand upon my heart, I salute Louise. In her there was much pulp, but the heart of the fruit was strong and white.

IV

WITH regard to Fleurette, it is different. I feel as though a pet lynx had leaped for my throat in the dark. I do not blame the animal—one does not blame inferior organisms—but I feel shame for her. I have fed her, caressed her, shielded her as best I could; have sometimes let her see me with my guard down. Though I did these things with full knowledge of the probability that she would one day turn on me, I cannot look with entire indifference at the fact.

The blow I excuse lightly; I had placed my throat in danger, inviting attack. I would have stood the stroke without a murmur by daylight, or even in the gloaming. The living creature whom one attempts to guide is entitled to a share of one's blood. The darkness—the lack of the courtesy of a warning—is the thing that makes me wince.

Why is it that they hate us so, these women who have loved us once? A year ago I would have sworn, if I had had no previous experience with sheep-

faces, that Fleurette was a friend. I took her up when she was unhappy, and for many months she enjoyed life with me. I bought her toys to play with, often depriving myself of necessities, for to try to make her happy was my obligation, in the circumstances. Day after day she was with me. She seemed to trust me as though I were God; and all the time there were suspicions in her mind that would have done me discredit if I had been Judas. The bud of treachery was always there, ready to burst into flower under any wandering gust of heat.

She loved me less, I think, than she had loved two other men, and much more than she had ever loved her husband. But she had liked her husband, whom she married for pique, more than she had come to believe, or chose to pretend. One could see behind the lines of the merciless sketches that she etched of him, between the oysters, or while she brushed her hair, depicting, as indifferently as a somnambulist walks a roof's edge, the very innards of his personality. One saw a tall lout, coarse-fibred, but partially redeemed by a heavy devotion to her, or perhaps only to his conception of the home which he wished her to help him to make.

After a hard day's work, he patiently endured his wife's indolence and her mother's scorpion tongue without much violence. Occasionally he retaliated, when the two fretful women, pouncing on him like flies on a yoked ox, aroused his ruminating mind to rage. He had his excuses, he had married Fleurette under a false impression, created deliberately by her, and she had never given him much of herself. Her story was that she had felt only disgust for him from the first, but one learns to accept such stories with a pinch of salt. It is probable that she liked him mildly, or at least that his bovine bulk had for her a temporary attraction.

Soon she will be exposing my weaknesses for the entertainment of my successor—if she has not already begun. Metaphorically she will caricature me in a statue, as the Aztec princess actu-

ally reproduced in gold the lovers whom she killed as soon as she grew weary of them, maintaining a growing gallery of obituary sculpture with an insouciance that struck horror into the naïve old historian. I shall bear no grudge. My feelings are no more worthy of consideration than another's, and I have not looked for mercy from a sheep-face since little Eve turned down her thumbs?

Fleurette recedes. My interest in the woman with a vixen's face, whom I met by chance, and in whose eyes I thought I saw an adventure, was an illusion. I am at a loose end.

Of the two women who have lately shown a preference for me, one is of the devastating jumpy type, and of an age to which Gaston used to refer in one of his lectures as sometimes mistaking for love a natural alarm lest opportunity fail to come until too late.

The other is a young girl. An adventure with her would be as flat to me as is a painting by Gauguin, and utterly foreign to my nature. I wish injury to no one. Women have love-interest for me only when through them I may see the Vision and hear the Singing Word, without which life would be a slough.

Usually Word and Vision come through work—the savage spending of one's force upon production, whether the result be a rail-fence or a novel, for effort is a true reply to all questions, and idleness is the real vice. One labours, one makes a serviceable shoe or graceful drawing, and is exultant. Dreams come and music plays, and in spirit one trumpets and beats one's chest, as does the giant ape of the forest when he feels his strength.

But there are times when faith wavers. The Singing Mouth is mute, and the Green Bough droops dismally across the window. Effort seems futile as a bell without a clapper; there is a chain around one's knees.

Comes to me then, if I am fortunate, a sheep-face in the mood. Temporarily she is desire and fruition—in her, my world centers until I regain a balance,

and the Green Bough lifts its drooping leaves to the sun, and the mist vanishes, and through the clear air I hear the Singing Word. If I feed and clothe and pet her, there is no danger of an injury, she moves in an impervious cloak of vanity, with which Na-

ture has wrapped her around. Protected, selfish, cruel, she comforts and revives me as could no other type; then, putting the incident indifferently behind her, passes on to complete her destiny.

Again I bow to her. Salaam!



I Have No Word

By David Morton

I HAVE no word to say the things you are:
 I strive and grope and stammer names—and fail;
 And you are still the unimagined star,
 The invisible tide, the light behind the sail.
 Moon shadows lie like lace upon the grass,
 And these are you in exquisite design;
 The troubled wheat, when noon-winds wake and pass,
 Give hint of you in every flowing line.

I have discovered you where twilight seas
 Fall silent and a silver barque goes by,
 Yet were you more than this,—than all of these:
 A beauty not of earth or sea or sky,
 But something free in each most lovely fame,
 Eluding still the prison of a name.



WHEN she is asleep a woman dreams of being pursued by regiments of rich and handsome moving-picture actors. When she is awake she devotes herself to making sure of one homely fellow with yellow freckles and \$5,000 cash in bank.



IT'S unfair to judge a woman by the men who love her.



The Vendor of Tears

By William M. Conselman

THE little old man closed my library door and stepped nimbly forward. He bowed until his long beard touched the rug, and said:

"I have something to sell you."

"What do you sell, good sir?" I asked courteously, for though he might be nothing more than a figment of my imagination, it is always well to be polite.

"Tears," he answered; "women's tears."

He unstrapped a flat leather case and laid it open on the table. As I peered curiously over his shoulder, he covered it with his hands, and demanded in concern:

"You are not by any chance a poet, sir?"

I shook my head, and he smiled with evident relief.

"I do not traffic with poets," he said. "Although they bring me a deal of business."

Fastened in the case were a dozen or more exquisitely tiny crystal phials, carved in various shapes, glowing and sparkling like jewels. From the slender ribbon that held it, he took a phial whose contents were a pale, translucent blue, like a bit of April sky prisoned in glass.

"Here," he said, "are tears that a maiden wept at midnight in her chamber."

He held it to the light.

"Pretty," I said. "Pretty, but common."

"Pardon me," I continued, "but have your baubles any practical value? Of what use are they?"

"Practical?" He puffed out his cheeks indignantly. "I would have you know,

young sir, that with my wares you may buy almost any unpurchasable commodity in the world. But while they are so valuable, you cannot sell them. Unless you are a poet. Poets sell them. Do you desire Love, or Knowledge, or Sorrow? You may purchase them with women's tears. Delight and despair, madness and misery—these, too, one buys with the goods I vend."

He replaced the first phial and took out another, of a dull, grayish-purple colour, like the bloom of a grape.

"These are the tears of a spinster for the son she never bore," he said. He held up another tube of deepest indigo shot with canary. "An actress wept these upon discovering a gray hair."

His bright eyes gazed a question. I shook my head.

"Well, then," he said, "here is something pretty. Expensive, however." He displayed a phial of beautiful, iridescent crimson, like transparent blood. "A mother's tribute to a wayward son who was hanged. Will you buy?"

"I have seen nothing that interests me," I said.

"Eh, sir, but you are hard to please," he said testily. "What would you?"

"Show me," I said firmly, "the pale green tears that a woman sheds when she forgives a rival who has worsted her."

He gave me a long, angry look.

"Now you are a poet after all," he accused, "since none but a poet could imagine such tears as you ask for!"

And before I could offer a word of remonstrance, he vanished as suddenly as he had appeared.

Furlough

By Clarkson Crane

I

IT was in the early spring of nineteen-eighteen that I met them, not long before the great German attack. I was on my way to Aix-les-Bains on furlough, and had stopped over for a few days in Paris. If one lived on the left bank, you know, one could avoid the Military Police.

I shall never forget how I felt when I came in from the front. After a winter of wet, gray desolation, sodden and full of ennui, to see again unbroken houses, civilians, life! Only those who were there will understand me. And then spring was coming. Sunshine, spring, freedom,—with no sound of cannon in the air! Those words express the mood I was in when I came to Paris.

Of course, I wanted to live for ten days like a puff of wind. I was a meteor rushing at life, and it was all for me. I had only to take, do, what I chose. Sadness, trouble among civilians? It never occurred to me.

I dined alone that night in a small restaurant opposite the Luxembourg, in the Rue des Medicis. I sat on a cushion before a white table, ate beefsteak, drank Chambertin, and watched in the flames of an open kitchen chickens turning on the spit and meat roasting. I was warm; and I felt so completely indoors, with the light-proof blinds drawn over the windows. We only of the maimed generation who groped through the tunnel of war know what it is to eat for the first time a good dinner after ages at the front.

I was drinking coffee and smoking a cigarette when I saw her. The door

opened, showing me during an instant the sombre blur of the Gardens and a melancholy, bluish light down the street; then she came in, a small, slim figure; walked quickly to a table opposite; sat down facing me; tapped for a moment on the white cloth; finally with nervous tugging gestures drew off her gloves; and, resting both elbows on the table, joined her hands together, and shaded her eyes. I had only time to see that her hair was dark, her face round and white, and—no, not haggard—strained, rather.

After that, I looked at the man who had followed her into the restaurant. When the waiter had taken his overcoat, he seated himself, with his back toward me, his shoulders hunched, and his coat-collar thrust upward, leaving visible only a narrow strip of his thick, reddish neck. When I heard him speak for the first time, to say "merci" or ask for the bill-of-fare, I forget which, I knew that he was an American. But not until the woman looked up, and said hurriedly in answer to a question of his that I couldn't hear, "I don't care! I don't care!" did I know that she was, too.

Then, because she bowed her head again suddenly into her hands, and drew her shoulders forward and together as if a chill had stabbed her, I became very curious about the pair, and ordered a liqueur and lit another cigarette so that I might sit there longer and watch them.

She did not move while the waiter, leaning forward slightly, stood beside the table. I could see the heavy man's elbows protruding on either side as he felt in his pockets for bread tickets.

When the waiter departed, his arms

dropped again, he tilted his head back, lowered it, and appeared to be staring at the woman who faced him; then he turned slowly, first toward the flaming kitchen, and afterward toward the shuttered window; and I saw each time a coarse cheek, a heavy lip, a sagging double chin. His eyes, I noticed, twitched rapidly.

I don't know just how long I sat there smoking and watching them. One by one the diners arose and went out, putting on overcoats and hats. Two officers, who had been sitting near me, went away, talking rapidly, and I realized that I was left alone on the cushioned seat, abandoned, with littered tables extending to my right and left, the smoke from my cigarette climbing above a sticky glass. Yet I did not want to go.

There she sat opposite me, sometimes resting her chin in the palm of her left hand, glancing at her plate, toward the door, or toward the evenly lapping flames in the kitchen. She ate nothing—save a crust of bread at which she nibbled pettishly, moistening her lips with wine afterward—and she looked not once at her companion. Leaning forward, his cheeks moving rhythmically, his elbows lifted slightly from his sides, he ate monotonously; new folds seemed to appear in the back of his neck; his head rocked from side to side; and he only spoke to her once, leaning back heavily in his chair.

Of course, I could not even hear his words. But she inclined her head forward, barely lifting her eyebrows, smiled quickly, as a preoccupied mother might in reply to an incoherent child; and, though I heard no sound, I felt that she uttered in a smooth, high, little voice an interrogatory "m-m-m-m-m-?"

At that moment, waiters came between us, and a trio of diners, emerging from an inner room.

When I looked again, she had her small chin pressed into the palms of both hands, and her elbows so close together on the table that it seemed as if a solitary stake upheld her face. There

was a rigidity about her position, as if she had assumed it with a jerk. Her cheeks seemed rounder than ever from the pressure of her hands; her head was tilted backward; and her eyes were half closed.

Then, even from across the room, I saw that from under the black lashes tears were oozing. They came forth deliberately, one by one, flattening themselves on her cheeks into glistening areas of moisture. I only saw one dart to the corner of her mouth. It hung there, continued to the palm of her hand; she shook herself rapidly; snatched her chin away; drew out a crumpled ball of a handkerchief and dabbed at her eyes. And all the while, the man opposite was feeding himself with head lowered.

After that one outbreak she seemed to gain control of herself, and waited patiently.

One by one sections of flame in the open kitchen snapped into darkness; a light or two vanished in a far corner of the room; and two or three waiters, conversing together, raised their voices in the silence. At last, straightening up suddenly and looking around as if he had just returned from another planet, the man lifted his hand (the fingers were thick, with gold rings on them) and called a bit gruffly:

"L'addition!"

When he arose, a moment later, to puff his way into the extended overcoat, I saw that his face was red and broken into a smile. He muttered a few words, laughed, placed a tooth-pick in his mouth, and made his way steadily to the door, with two waiters, like cavalry outposts, trotting before him.

And she followed, chin raised slightly, hands before her busy with her gloves. When she reached the door, she looked around; and for an instant her glance drew itself across me. I thought she smiled—in the rapid, vanishing way I had noticed before; and I lifted the sticky liqueur glass, with which I had been toying, to my lips, and tilted it upward. She did smile then, I am sure,—smiled sadly, turned her head

away at once, and vanished out into the gray, moist evening.

The door closed.

II

OF course I thought of her all the next day. I shan't say "thought of nothing else," because I was in Paris on leave after seven or eight months at the front. What really occupied my mind, no doubt, was where to eat lunch, what *apéritif* to try (mine was the naïve glut-tony of a man from the wilderness); and I remember, too, several hours spent along the quais with my head thrust into boxes of old books.

Five o'clock found me on the terrace of a café, looking, through the inter-weaving figures of passersby, toward the grille fence around the Luxembourg. The weather was gray, with a solid sky of clouds grouped over the buildings, and on the trees only the faintest powder of green was visible. I had decided to return that evening to the same restaurant: I wanted to see her again and speak to her if possible.

Looking back now, I cannot say that my only feeling toward her was pity (though pity was prominent). Let me say that I was interested—and that will be enough. Remember that I had the delicious irresponsibility of a private soldier; I wanted to live for ten days like a puff of wind; I was on furlough—nothing mattered.

And so I took my place at the same table and began my dinner, only half expecting that they would return.

They came. She entered first, as on the other evening, and walked rapidly across the room; her eyes lowered to the gloves she was withdrawing—just as she had done before. Their table of last night was occupied; but she did not notice this until she stood a foot or two away. Then, with an abrupt, little start, she waited there, rather limply with her back toward me, her right hand, gripping the gloves, hanging straight down at her side.

"Emily, here's one!"

I think that both of us, she and I,

turned simultaneously toward the voice. He stood pointing, his overcoat halfway into the arms of an eager waiter, a white muffler dangling around his neck. And he waited, while she seated herself, receiving her rapid flash of a smile as a calm, leaden sea would swallow a ray of light. Deliberately, she piled her bag and gloves on a corner of the table, pressing them down with care; and then silence came upon the two.

How I first spoke to her is of no importance: the thing happened, that is all. It was by intervention, I believe, between a voluble waiter and an uncomprehending, bewildered Sam Dreyler. That, I learned at once, was his name.

"Sam Dreyler," he said, "originally from San Francisco, but from almost any place in the States. I travel. And this is my wife—Mrs. Dreyler. We're always glad to see one of our boys in khaki. Especially one who can parley-voo, eh? Ha! Ha! The wife, she shoots it pretty well, and I thought I was all right before I came over. But they talk so fast I can't stop 'em. But sit down, sit down. Hey, *garçon*, bring the gentleman's coffee over here. Yes, *oui, oui! C'est ça, c'est ça. Café.*"

She was silent at first, looking at the table cover or around the room; but while I was watching a saccharine tablet dissolve in my coffee, she said all at once, turning to me quickly:

"Oh, it's so nice to meet an American over here. It does take me right back home!"

I asked her if she too came from San Francisco, adding: "Because I do."

She did; and there followed a stream of banalities from Sam Dreyler, who became jovial and red, and spoke in a sonorous voice.

"A nice city, Mr. Channing, a nice city. But there's something about 'Gay Paree,' eh? A little something. Well, I'm over here for the Planet Stove Company of Chicago. Government contract stuff, you know. My wife, she's been over here a little bit before me, haven't you, dear? And we just met in Nice a couple weeks ago, didn't we,

dear? Swell place, Nice! You been down there?"

Only once during the evening did I have an opportunity to speak to her alone. Sam Dreyler, pushing back his chair, strode away, and vanished through the door leading to the washroom. I felt all at once tongue-tied, as if the bottom of everything had fallen away from beneath my feet. I began timidly:

"I'm so glad I met you. Last night I noticed you sitting over there, and I thought—I thought that I might help you in some way."

"Help me?"

"Well, show you around the city. I know Paris fairly well. I've been here before."

"Oh, that's so nice of you!"

She began silently to press the handle of her knife into the table cloth. I said:

"Will you be here long?"

She disregarded my question; but after a moment turned to me with that nervous, overflowing spontaneity of hers.

"I'm so glad I know you. You don't know how glad I am."

Then she remained silent, looking downward, while a waiter transferred onto his tray a squadron of empty dishes.

"Mr. Channing offered to show us around Paris," she said, when Sam Dreyler returned.

"Thank you, thank you, Mr. Channing. It's a big city, a big, big city. But come, Emily, dear, we must be going."

She smiled for a longer time while the waiter held her coat.

Sam Dreyler, puffing into his own, said:

"We're staying at the Hotel Madison, just off the Avenue de l'Opéra. Good American name, eh? Any time—"

Just before the door closed behind them (I stood beside the table holding a napkin bunched together) she said:

"Oh, I love Paris, Mr. Channing. I love this part here. Every morning I

come over for a walk in the Luxembourg Gardens . . . Good night."

III

I REMEMBER how I sat the next morning in the Café Voltaire, smoking a cigarette over an empty coffee cup, and pondered the last words she had spoken. "Oh, I love Paris, Mr. Channing. I love this part here."

Outside no rain was falling, but a gray sky drooped low over the city, and many of the passers-by carried umbrellas. I too loved "this part here." The very stones of the street seemed to know me; everything I saw, the dark fence around the old Luxembourg, even the mud in the gutters, farther away the gray book-lined galleries around the Odéon, all gave forth memories that rose in clouds and trooped toward me. I don't know what it was that put me in the mood; but when I left the café and made my way into the gardens, I walked sadly through dead scenes that seemed to live again, unaware of my presence.

She came toward me along that walk bordered by statues of old queens. She moved slowly, looking out over the garden toward the gray palace. It seems to me that we were almost alone there; at least I was aware of no one else—only an old man with a pointed white beard, who held a large book under his arm and leaned against the stone parapet.

"Oh—Mrs. Dreyler."

"Oh."

She started, then smiled rapidly, and held out her hand.

It was the first time that I had seen her face in the daylight; and, to my surprise, it looked smaller, with deep shadows under the eyes. Her mouth, too—I had not realized that the lips protruded as in a continual pout. But there was a nice slimness about her, and a breath of perfume—white lilac—rose from her. I remember finding, as I walked along, something elusive about her features, and a strange old wisdom in her eyes. For I was on furlough,

remember; life seemed to me a dream; and here I was walking straight along the alley of romance.

She was silent at first; and because she made no reply at all, I went on talking vaguely about the Gardens, pointing out a spot here, a spot there, and telling her what sort of clothes I had worn as a student. She listened, looking up at me and smiling now and then. And once she said: "Oh, what fun!" But she began nothing herself; and at last (we were half-way around the path) I said eagerly: "But don't you think Paris is wonderful?"

"I think it's a nice place," she answered. But her eyes were on the ground.

"We," I went on, "we don't want to walk around here any more. I know just the restaurant for luncheon—a perfect little place."

We had paused not far from a calm-eyed statue. Mrs. Dreyler looked up at me in surprise.

"Oh, I couldn't, Mr. Channing; Sam, he wouldn't like that. Oh, no, Mr. Channing. I gotta go back soon. I—I—"

It struck me all at once what an utterly commonplace little person she was, and what an idiot I was. For an instant I actually hated her—with all my power. Then, looking down, I saw that she was crying.

"What, what,—why, Mrs. Dreyler, can I—is there—?"

She shook her head, walked toward the statue, and stood near the base of it with her back toward me. I saw her hands fumbling at her purse and soon the crumpled handkerchief came forth and rose toward the eyes. Then she turned, with that rapid smile:

"Excuse me, Mr. Channing, only—only—I—I only—" Her lips opened like those of a child, and she sobbed: "Only I'm—I'm not happy!"

I don't remember what I said. I know that I was quite unequal to the situation. She stood there, tearful and choking, under the grayish-white statue of a queen of France. A few blades of new grass leaned out from the base; the dark trees of the Gardens stretched

away; and beneath them were the alleys on which a few children played.

For a while neither of us spoke. The man with the pointed white beard walked by, glancing in our direction. I blessed him: only a Parisian could have disregarded us so sympathetically, with that quiet, understanding smile. Then came stammered phrases, prolonged minutes, finally a little avalanche of words from Mrs. Dreyler, almost incoherent, each tripping on the heels of the one before.

"Oh, Mr. Channing. I just wanted to tell you about me,—I—I just had to tell someone—an', an'—you looked so nice—an', an'—it's about me and Mr. Dreyler—Sam—You know. I—we—"

She stopped, dabbed with her handkerchief at her nose and eyes, and gave me a rapid, rather moist smile.

"I—I—we—don't get along at all. Sam and I—no—we—"

Her tears literally bubbled forth again; and she drew near me, her child's mouth distorted, and touched the breast of my uniform with her small hat.

Instinctively, I put an arm around her shoulder and began to stroke her back lightly. And there we stood in the misty silence of the sombre Gardens. She stepped back suddenly, almost to the base of the statue.

"Sam and I have only been together over here about a month," she began hurriedly. "I left him in America and—came over—before the war. Then he came over, and we met again."

"You met him in Paris?" I asked stupidly, in the stillness.

"In Nice. Don't you remember what he said last night about Nice? I went there with an old lady—a rich old lady from Chicago. I was her companion. She was awful nice and kind; and then Sam came along, an', oh, I don't know, an' then I went back to him."

She choked for a moment; then: "You don't mind me telling you all this? Maybe it's silly. Only when I first saw you I felt you'd understand."

"Of course, of course. And—and Sam followed you over?"

"Oh, not exactly. He was coming,

anyway. Those—those stoves you know. Oh, that wasn't the first time I left him. We were married five years ago in San Francisco, but—but—we've—I've never been happy. I—"

She paused again, tearfully; then breathed deeply, and rested her hands (she wore shabby, brownish gloves) against the weather-beaten marble. And little by little the story came forth.

"He was nice to me, Sam was; he did everything; but, oh, I don't know. I—I somehow felt disappointed. I liked him, an' then, an' then sometimes I'd hate him.

"And so I went away after a few months—without telling him where. For a while I worked in a fruit-packing house in Santa Clara. It wasn't bad—a big wooden place with openings all over it. I could watch the trees from where I sat. The greens were—were so pretty. But there was an Italian foreman, a nice quiet fellow, I thought, with a long, gray beard and a straight nose. One day—well one day he got fresh, an'—an' I went away.

"Then I worked in a big bookstore in San Francisco. I—I always liked books. The girls were nice to me. I began to read some of that fellow, that Hindu man, you know—Tagore. I thought it was just too beautiful, but I couldn't understand much. I—I never had much education.

"I went along like that for several months. Then one day I met Sam on the street. I—I was coming upstairs out of a cafeteria, and he saw me. He took both my arms, and squeezed me. He said: 'Emily, Emily, you come back to me!' You know—you know—he looked so nice then, I—I thought I liked him and I did go back.

"It was all right for a while. Sam was making good money. But—but, oh, I don't know why, but I couldn't stand it, and went away again—we were in Chicago then. I got a job as a nurse with a nice family on the North Side. Then—then—I went back to Sam. I don't know why it is, Mr. Channing. I go to him, an' then, an' then, I just can't stand it."

She looked up at me with her small eyes wide open.

"But are you happy when you're not with him?" I asked.

She shook her head.

"No,—no,—I—I'm not. But I went away again. I was companion to Mrs. Travis. She's awful rich, an' we stayed at a big hotel in Nice. I learned a little French. It was easy. Then—oh—then Sam came and I went with him. That's all, Mr. Channing."

A few drops of rain were beginning to fall, and I could see a nursemaid some distance away, gathering two children, shaking, and hurrying them away. For the first time I became aware of the monotonous drone of auto-horns in the Boulevard St. Michel. I felt the heavy dampness of the air.

Standing against the statue, Emily Dreyler said quickly:

"I don't know what to do, Mr. Channing."

I didn't either. I said vaguely:

"It's raining."

"Oh, yes, I must be going back. I'll take a taxi."

Walking silently, we left the Gardens together. I motioned to a taxi that stood beside the curb, and opened the door, while the driver was cranking up his motor.

"But how did Sam—Mr. Dreyler—find you in Nice?"

She bowed her head, sitting there in the auto. Then she looked up suddenly:

"Oh—I—I wrote to him. Yes—I wrote to him."

The door closed. She leaned forward:

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Channing, thank you."

I watched the swaying taxi hurry away toward the Seine.

IV

ON the following day, quite by chance, I met them together. They were standing near the Obelisk in the Place de la Concorde, two dark figures isolated amid charging, droning au-

tomobiles. Sam Dreyler's arm was raised, pointing across the Seine, and, before I spoke, I heard him saying:

"I call that swell, Emily, eh? That's what I call swell."

He faced me, red and jovial, holding out his hand; she started and remained silent.

"Oh, we think this is some place," began Sam, taking his wife's arm and pressing it to his side. "That's great, eh? Up there, the avenue and that arch. When are you leaving Paris, Mr. Channing?"

"To-morrow morning."

"And you're over there at the same hotel?"

I left them after a moment's conversation. Emily said but a word or two and kept her eyes on the pavement. I thought, when I looked back, that I was seeing them for the last time. Sam Dreyler, fat and smiling, waved his hat after me widely.

* * *

A last day in Paris! I finished everything that I should have done on the days preceding; spent two hours around the Odéon buying a dozen books which I should have to carry in a stuffed *musette* over my shoulder; dined prosaically in a Duval place; and returned aching to my room.

It was on the second floor, facing the Place du Panthéon. The walls were dingily yellow, the carpet worn, the bed shabby; and the red plush comforter folded on it was faded.

I sank into a chair, lighting a cigarette; really, I had not noticed before how cold and damp the place was.

Sitting there, I watched the smoke ascend and listened to the dying sounds in the street. I remember that I was very tired, thought vaguely of my early train in the morning, wondered at what time to be called. I must have been in a sort of stupor; for I started and opened my eyes wide at the burst of voices outside my door. There was the voice of a woman speaking rapidly in French (I recognized my landlady) and then a man's voice that uttered abrupt,

incoherent sounds. I heard Madame insisting:

"Oui, oui, il est là. Il est là. Tenez, je vais voir."

And then I made out that the man was repeating again and again, in gruff monotony:

"Musha Channing! Musha Channing!"

I opened the door even while Madame was knocking, saw her agitated face, heard her begin:

"Un Monsieur qui—"

Then Sam Dreyler, panting, seized my arms, pushed me back into the room. I saw Madame's amazed face as she closed the door; I sank onto the bed, and motioned toward the chair. But Sam Dreyler, crumpling his soft hat in his hand, his overcoat collar turned up, strode to the window and back, breathing deeply, and then faced me, his eyes blinking quickly.

"Mr. Channing, I need your help. I need your help, Mr. Channing. You're the only man I know in Paris, and you say you're acquainted with the city. I need your help, Mr. Channing. I—I—"

His face grew red, and he coughed. I asked:

"Sit down, sit down."

But he shook his head, wiped his forehead with his thick hand, and leaned against the wall.

"I need your help, Mr. Channing. It's—it's—it's about my wife, Emily. She—"

He choked, reached out an arm, pawed at the air, found the chair somehow, and dropped into it.

Then, resting his elbows on his knees, he pressed his broad face into the palms of his hands and burst out sobbing.

I said weakly:

"Mr. Dreyler, oh, Mr. Dreyler," and fell silent.

His great shoulders swayed and heaved, black hair tumbled onto his forehead; one big foot, in a patent leather shoe, scraped the floor and bent upward onto the toe; a lower button snapped from his overcoat; between his

thick fingers tears oozed forth and ran down onto his rings.

He looked up suddenly, drawing the back of his hand across his eyes: the white prints of his fingers turned slowly pink on his cheeks.

"She's gone away from me," he said. "She's gone and left me. Oh, Mr. Channing, what'll I do? What'll I do?"

What could I say? Leaning forward, I did my best.

"Oh, come, come, Mr. Dreyler. I'm sure it's not so bad as all that. There's something you haven't told me. Try to calm yourself, Mr. Dreyler."

I was patting his knee. He sat upright suddenly.

"Not so bad? Not so bad? It's worse. That's just it. It's worse. She's going to do something awful—awful. Here"—he thrust his hand under his overcoat and drew out a crumpled sheet of paper.

"Here—read that."

I took it, and saw in large, round handwriting:

Good-bye, Sam, I can't stand it any more. Maybe you'll find me in the river. Don't forget to take your tablets.
Emily.

He stared at me in silence. Then he rose to his feet, walked to the window, and stood with his back toward me. His head, as he moved, had touched the hanging electric light globe and set it swinging, so that shadows danced about the room.

"I love her so," he broke out, "You don't know how I love her."

He turned around fiercely:

"I don't care about nothin' else. Do you think I give a damn about the Planet Stove Company? I want Emily! Why don't she like me?"

There came silence again. He strode toward me.

"But what'll we do? What'll we do? You ought to know. That's why I came to see you. Come on, get your coat. I've got a taxi downstairs. Hurry up, hurry up. Good God, hurry up."

"But where do you want to go?"

Again I felt unequal to the situation.

"Anywhere! Anywhere! You ought to know. You do know, don't you?" He looked at me.

"To your hotel first of all. They know you there. You can telephone anywhere."

He followed obediently as a child to the taxi, and climbed in. While we hummed and rattled across Paris, he bowed his face into his hands and said not a word. I don't believe he was crying, for his shoulders did not move. He looked up just as we were crossing the Seine in the darkness; and when he saw the subtle, half-hidden movement of the black river, he bowed forward again abruptly.

The Rue de Rivoli seemed interminable that night. There we were, plunging forward in the dark, through a strange, crowded world, spotted here and there with round, blue lights. Figures dodged from before us, twisting grotesquely; other vehicles rushed upon us from obscurity: the trembling window glass blurred all I saw, and made the buildings quiver.

And always at my side was the heavy, silent Dreyler, swaying with the motion of the taxi, and touching my shoulder now and then.

We swung into the Avenue de l'Opéra, then into a side street, and stopped with a jerk.

Sam Dreyler raised his head slowly, blinking, and reached out a bare hand toward the door. I opened it, stepped onto the sidewalk, helped him out. He moved vaguely as if in a dream.

"Go in," I said, and turned to the driver.

I was facing him, waiting for my change, when I heard Dreyler's voice. It was a roar without words, guttural, prolonged.

Turning quickly, I saw him, arms outstretched, overcoat unbuttoned, tottering forward toward the hotel doorway. And then I saw Emily, emerging from the shadow.

She came to him, raising her gloved hands, her white face crumpled up, and

I heard her say in a high, weak voice:
"Sam! Oh, Sammy!"

I did not wait. Glancing around, I saw them close together, his loose overcoat flapping around her body. Her head was pressed against him, and I could see his large, bare hands thumping her back, one after the other.

V

I LEFT Paris the next day. But the fresh morning dew of my furlough had dried, and I passed away the days—but not like a puff of wind.

I never saw the Dreylers again. But months later, I received a post-card,

sent to my military address. On it was written:

Dear Mr. Channing,

I have left Sam again. He has gone back to America, and here I am at Cannes with another rich lady. I think it's awfully queer. I don't understand anything. Good-bye.

*Sincerely yours,
Emily Dreyler.*

I don't know what became of them. Doubtless they are still alive, following—to some vague end—their strange, interwoven destinies on the earth.



Song in the Hills

By Margaret Lane

MY song is slight as words may be
And heedless as the breeze,
Light as the shining drops of rain
That shake from the budding trees.

And it will hardly still a grief
Nor ease a heart that's aching—
But there's a windy hill that knows
What joy was in its making!



GIRLS have a hard time of it. If they kiss clumsily men think that they are pretending, and if they kiss well men think that they must be professionals.



LAUGHTER is a device whereby men show how foolish they are, and women conceal how wise they are.



The Hermit

By Jameson Andrews

THERE was a man.
He was a Hermit.

* * *

He lived on a high mountain
in a cave.

He was an old man and very
wise.

Many men scaled the mountain
to hold converse with the Hermit
and reap the benefit of his great
wisdom.

One day a woman climbed the mountain.

It does not matter whether the lovely
hair of her was showered with pure gold
dust or whether her wide hips billowed
like the waves of Waikiki . . .

She was a woman . . .

* * *

There was a man . . .

She was a woman . .

There was no longer a Hermit.



I Made You a Song

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

I MADE you a song of rain along the tree-tops
In an old woodland that the world forgets,
Then found that Spring had wandered to a hillside
And written it in violets.

I made you a song of an old, nameless longing
Where you had walked the moon-mad sands with me,
Then heard, above my heart, forever singing
The vasty longing of the Sea.

And now I make you but a song of loving,
Of young blood thrilled and lips that touch and cling—
Something the Spring cannot write out in flowers,
Nor waters of the Sea can sing!

But with the violets upon the hillside
This song of love may fade, in season die—
Only is sure the old Sea's vasty longing,
And yet I cannot tell you why!

The Triumph

By Charles King Van Riper

I

HE was an old man with a very high forehead. Burgess was his name, and he was always striking attitudes. Especially was he fond of running the fingers of one hand through the thin white hair above his brow, and thrusting the other into the front of his coat, always conveniently unbuttoned. Every one at the almshouse knew he had been on the stage. Burgess never let them forget it.

"Hamlet," old Jerry Murphy had called him, and the name bestowed by Jerry—dead, departed, and in the potter's field long since—had stuck to Burgess. But as surely as any one would call him "Hamlet" he would correct them.

"Prince Hamlet," he would remind them with dignity.

It happened that when Burgess was on the stage his talents were never regarded highly enough to warrant his being given anything but the part of the first gravedigger. Indeed, the companies in which he played attempted only on infrequent occasions to interpret the tragedy of the melancholy Dane. For the most part the troupe contented itself with those masterpieces in which the girl is constantly in peril of being wronged by the villain. Burgess was nearly always the father of the harried heroine.

But when the pensioners at the almshouse began to call him "Hamlet," it pleased a vanity that was the most robust thing about the old fellow. Somehow or other he got hold

of a copy of the play and began to commit it to memory.

He would stalk up and down the dormitory delivering its eloquent periods in a sonorous voice and with a wealth of gesture. He might pause in pacing, confront an unoffending cot, and, recoiling, exclaim:

"Angels and ministers of grace defend us,
Be thou spirit of health or goblin damned! . . ."

At first such outbursts would bring applause from the other old fellows. But after the novelty wore off they would howl their disapproval, until Burgess, drowned out by the angry chorus, would be forced to take refuge in a remote corner, there to brood as did the Dane himself.

"Give us something new!" they would jeer, and Burgess would stop his ears to shut out their blasphemies against the bard and the noble prince.

The leader of these demonstrations was one John Morgan. Of the others only Malachi Springer refrained from joining in the persecution of Burgess. And Malachi admitted that he was "a little deaf." So Burgess would unburden himself to Malachi Springer, who would shift his pipe from one corner of his all but toothless mouth, then back again, nodding his head the while . . . but hearing scarcely an eighth of what Burgess was saying.

"Would I had been born three decades later!" sighed Burgess.

"Yes, you do look like Dan'l Webster," agreed Malachi, who, having

missed the words, could only judge by the pose Burgess had struck.

The old actor stifled his exasperation and hitched his chair closer.

"I said it was a harsh dictate of Fate," explained Burgess, "that I should have been born in a day when there were great players: The immortal Booth, Barrett. . . . Why, who have they today? Who? E. H. Sothern—Mantell?"

Burgess sniffed and gestured his disdain. Old Malachi tried to fathom the gesture, but without success.

"The nerve! The monumental nerve!" exclaimed Burgess. "Think of this Sothern, this Mantell, essaying the part of the Prince of Denmark. Pantaloons to set themselves up as actors! Egad! Shakespearean actors!"

"If I were on the boards today, I'd show them," promised Burgess, "I, Weldon Burgess, would play Prince Hamlet! I would show them!"

He drew a deep breath, then boomed:

"Alas, poor Yorick, I knew him . . ."

Malachi, who could not miss the words spoken in Burgess's profound professional bass, caught him quickly by the sleeve.

"Has another one died?" he asked querulously.

"Died!" exclaimed Burgess, impatient at the interruption. "I didn't say that anyone had died."

"Well, who's this Yorick?"

"It's in the play!" explained Burgess, "in the play!"

"Oh!" Malachi nodded vigorously. "I didn't remember no one by the name of Yorick in the almshouse since I've been here. There was a Craddock once. . . ."

"What's you and Hamlet talking about?" asked John Morgan as he came shuffling up.

"*Prince Hamlet*," muttered Burgess, then, seeing that the thing was impossible, rose and left Malachi at the mercy of the garrulous Mr. Morgan.

II

So it was always with Burgess, bemoaning the fact that Fortune was such a sorry jade as to have weakened him with age in a day when his talents would have won him fame. If he were thirty years younger what a Prince he would give them! These impostors would be howled from the boards. . . . Egad! if only *he* could have an audience!

The old fellow thought of the approaching Christmas entertainment at the almshouse. Perhaps he could give it then. But hope died at the remembrance that this Morgan made the recommendations to the superintendent concerning talent among the men themselves. Burgess did not dare risk the superintendent's wrath by offering his services except through the regular channels. It was quite hopeless.

Then, one day, Kittredge, the superintendent, summoned Burgess to come down to the office.

"Pete" Kittredge was one of the glories of the political system inaugurated by Andrew Jackson. He had been a truck driver, a minor league umpire, a boxing promoter, but first, last and always a worker for the organization. So when the organization got control and the almshouse job came along "Pete" Kittredge was given the place.

Old Burgess entered to find the superintendent with his feet on the desk and a cigar tilted upward at an angle that added to the belligerent set of his jaw.

Kittredge did not suggest that the public pensioner sit down. He just glowered at the old man. The forehead seemed to fascinate him.

"Some dome!" he ejaculated; then, narrowing his eyes, demanded: "What's this I hear about you going around spouting that 'Hamlet, I am thy father's omelette!' stuff?"

A faint colour came into Burgess's white face.

"You refer," he asked quietly, "to

my readings from 'The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark'?"

He pronounced the full name of the play with pride.

"Yeh, that's it," snapped Kittredge. "What about it?"

Old Burgess was confused. He didn't know just what he was supposed to say.

Kittredge's feet came down to the floor with a crash and he leaned across his desk.

"Do you know what I'm going to do?" he demanded.

The bewildered Burgess shook his head.

"Well," continued Kittredge, his cigar rising and falling, "I'm going to get the county physician to have a look at you."

Burgess swayed.

"You mean . . .?" he stammered.

"I mean," said Kittredge bluntly, "that the boys say you're crazy as a loon."

Burgess's mouth opened, but he could not speak.

"And if half of what they tell me is so," observed Kittredge, flicking the ashes from his cigar, "I guess they're right. They say you go around mumbling 'I'm only mad north-north-west. But I can still tell a hawk from a hack-saw,' or something like that."

"But it's in the play!" protested Burgess.

"What's in the play?" Kittredge retorted, "that stuff about hack-saws?"

Burgess nodded.

"Ah g'wan!" hooted the superintendent. "Shakespeare's high-brow stuff. There's nothing high-brow about a hack-saw."

But Burgess had produced the much-used volume and, holding it in hands that shook, was fumbling over the pages.

"Here!" he exclaimed, proffering the book. Kittredge took it and read.

"Yeh, it's there," he agreed, smacking his lips.

Then looking up the superintendent declared:

"That wasn't the only thing, though. I don't just remember what the others were, but they all agree you go around muttering like a lunatic."

"If you'll permit me," said Burgess with dignity, retrieving the book, "I may explain that Prince Hamlet the Dane was both melancholy and mad. . . ."

Kittredge stopped scratching his head. "First I heard of it. I thought he was one of them young bucks like Romeo. . . ."

"No! no!" objected Burgess with tragic intonation.

"They say you think you're Hamlet," broke in Kittredge.

"That is not true," Burgess replied. "Old Jerry Murphy called me that in jest because I had been on the stage. The fact is, sir, that Shakespeare, the master genius, made his prince a mad man and to Philistine ears his words have seemed my own."

"You mean that all that you've been speling is in the book?" demanded Kittredge, bent on plain talk.

"Precisely that, sir."

"And those birds thought it was some personal line you was pulling?" pursued the superintendent.

He pushed a button in the wall behind him.

"I presume so, sir," Burgess answered, and offered anxiously, "I hope you won't think it necessary to call in the county physician, sir. It would be very embarrassing."

"No, I guess we can get along without the doc," growled Kittredge, and as the almshouse man of all work appeared in the doorway, Kittredge snapped:

"Bring this fellow Morgan down here."

"Morgan!" exclaimed Burgess, drawing himself up and lifting his eyebrows.

"Yes, Morgan," echoed Kittredge. "He was the one who made the complaint."

The subordinate had gone.

Burgess thrust his hand into the

breast of his coat, and lowered his head meditatively.

When he looked up there was a brighter light in those eyes than there had been in many a day.

Kittredge could not fail to notice it.

"I have been deeply wronged," said Burgess, sure of the other's attention, "and I think, sir, in the interest of justice . . ."

"There'll be justice, all right!" breathed Kittredge.

Burgess, ignoring the interruption, went on:

"I feel that I should be given a chance to set myself right before my fellows. . . ."

Kittredge held the inhalation from his cigar, wondering what was coming.

"We are to have here at the almshouse," Burgess continued, "a Christmas entertainment. I, Weldon Burgess, want to read once more before I die that superb soliloquy. . . ."

"You mean you want to ring in on the program this year?"

Burgess nodded with becoming modesty.

"It's old stuff," muttered Kittredge.

"It's immortal!" Burgess corrected quietly.

"I say it's old!" snapped the superintendent. "You want to shoot 'em something full of pep. That Shakespeare junk don't go nowadays. They can't understand it—don't mean anything! It don't get over!"

"Then I can't deliver the soliloquy?" The old fellow was bitterly disappointed.

Kittredge began to grumble something, but stopped short as the door opened and Morgan entered timidly. The next instant the superintendent was on his feet and striding across the room; Burgess falling back and Morgan scuttling out of the way. Kittredge turned the key in the lock, then put his back to the door and glared at Morgan.

"What do you mean by running to me with your lies?" he snarled.

The wretched Morgan trembled.

Kittredge glanced at Burgess.

"This rat," he said, shaking a finger at the quailing Morgan, "told me you were crazy. If a man said that about me, I'd punch his head off. . . . What are you going to do about it?"

Burgess looked blankly at the superintendent.

"Morgan," roared Kittredge, "your friend says he ain't crazy. . . . That gives the lie to what you said."

"I didn't lie," snivelled Morgan. "He is crazy!"

"Well then," demanded Kittredge, "you ain't going to let him get away with it?"

"No, I ain't!" muttered Morgan, and closing his shaking fists advanced on Burgess.

Amazed at the turn things had taken, Burgess stood open-mouth while Morgan landed three pathetic punches. A fourth time the other's fist struck just below Burgess's heart, his weak spot. It made him dizzy for a moment, but he stepped back and out of reach.

"Are you going to stand there and let him hit you?" demanded Kittredge.

"Take it back!" spluttered Morgan, out of breath from his exertion.

Burgess turned with anger and contempt toward the bully who had pitted two tottering old men against each other. But before he could remonstrate, Morgan was lunging at him again. Once more Burgess was hit below the heart. Another like that, even from Morgan's feeble fists, might do for him.

Burgess closed his eyes and struck out with his open hand. He heard a thud against the floor, and opened his eyes to see Morgan sprawled before him, motionless.

Kittredge stepped up briskly.

"That'll be all," he announced. "You win, Hamlet."

"It's—it's an outrage!" protested Burgess breathlessly.

Kittredge turned on him.

"Think so?" he sneered. "Well, we've

got to have discipline here. The law won't let us lay a finger on you. But it don't say nothing about you mixing it up among yourselves. And remember, not a word about this, or, so help me, I'll make trouble for you."

Burgess had lowered himself stiffly to his knees beside the inert Morgan. The superintendent was putting a fresh light to his cigar. He bit off and spat out the soggy end. Then he turned to Burgess.

"Come on, clear out of here!" he ordered. "Take him with you. . . . And keep your mouth shut."

Burgess eyed the other steadily without rising.

"Get out!" commanded Kittredge.

"Mr. Kittredge," said Burgess in a voice that quavered with excitement, "this man is dead!"

Kittredge burst into a guffaw of laughter.

"Quit your kiddin', Hamlet," he chuckled. "Get him upstairs. He'll be all right in a little while."

"He's dead, I tell you," Burgess insisted.

Something in the old fellow's manner made Kittredge bend down over the man on the floor.

Burgess drew his hand away from above Morgan's head and the superintendent, with some hesitancy, placed his there.

Burgess's eyes never left the other's face.

He saw the half sneering expression change to a sickly smile, the smile disappear with a twitch of terror.

"He is dead!" gasped Kittredge.

Burgess nodded.

"Dead!" the superintendent muttered dazedly, forcing himself to his feet, "Dead as a doornail!"

"Discipline!" was Burgess's bitter whisper.

"He's dead!" cried Kittredge, stepping back.

Then, suddenly straightening his arm so a blunt finger pointed at Burgess, the man thundered. "He's dead, and, by God, *you* killed him!"

III

WHEN the time came, "Pete" Kittredge told of opening the door of his office just in time to see Burgess strike the blow that killed Morgan. Not one of the old fellows in the institution dared to testify against the superintendent. They were too terrified for that. Some of them even stood ready to give corroborative testimony that the defendant had killed (the by this time canonized) Morgan with malice aforethought . . . the feud in the dormitory, etc. But it wasn't necessary.

Burgess confessed.

"Pete" Kittredge could scarcely believe his good fortune when the old fellow on being arraigned inquired for what crime the death penalty was exacted. Then, when he was told it was for premeditated murder, Burgess said that he had meant to kill Morgan and he was glad he had done it.

It was a strange quirk that ever brought Burgess to such an act. Perhaps the old fellow's sense of the dramatic led him to do it. Death in the almshouse and death in the electric chair were the extremes in dramatic value. One was to expire as a voice in the ebbing clamor of the mob, off left. The other was to die center-stage, with the spot turned on full. And there was another reason.

In the brief but spectacular proceedings, Burgess, whose time to die was normally near at hand, found himself again an actor on the stage. He made each word and gesture count. Never was there in the criminal courts a more picturesque figure than this white-haired old man with his wide, high forehead and his Websterian pose. Through it all he carried himself with distinction. And the big scene was still to come.

"My friend," he asked the prison doctor one day, "when I am about to die, they will ask me if I have anything to say?"

"It's customary," said the doctor, "but don't worry about it, old fellow." It was the physician's private opinion that Burgess wouldn't live for the or-

deal of the chair. The old man's heart was behaving badly . . . had been since those punches of Morgan's landed below it.

When the doctor left, Burgess smiled. His hour was at hand! And what a triumph it would be: For Weldon Burgess, for the players of his historic day, for the living genius of Shakespeare, and for Prince Hamlet! He would read the soliloquy, read it as it never had been read before . . .

Burgess felt a twinge at his heart. In pain and fright he called out the doctor's name. It brought the medical man hurrying back to the cell.

For days Burgess fought it out. He could not die like this, when victory was in sight. He must live; must live to die to the everlasting glory of the Prince! But his heart . . . his heart . . .

The day came.

Old Burgess had to be helped to his feet. But he walked alone. The old fellow was faint from weakness. He walked with a rigid, jarring step . . . That he walked at all was due to the indomitable will of the man.

He passed through the door of the death chamber, lurched toward the chair. Attendants caught him and lowered him to the seat.

The whole thing was hazy to him, up to the point where with the death cap held in abeyance he was asked: "Have you anything to say?"

A remarkable smile came to the old fellow's face. The big scene at last: the audience, millions, wherever newspapers were printed. The faces around him were ghastly.

Then in the stillness of the death house the old man's voice rose:

"To be, or not to be: That is the question,
Whether 'tis nobler . . ."

On through the resonant periods he went with clear enunciation and fine voice:

"To die, to sleep, no more . . ."

His heart was fluttering now, but still he kept to it bravely:

"To sleep? Perchance to dream?.."

The old man faltered, stumbled, recovered. He went on. Then his voice broke. Only three more lines! He must speak them!

". . . that the dread of something
after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose
bourn . . ."

His voice was very faint, and silence closed like still water over his whisper:

"No traveler returns!"



TO fall in love with a woman is to learn wisdom. Not to fall in love with a woman is to possess it.



A MAN does things without thinking. A woman without caring.



Pommiers Normands

By Yvonne Durand

“**P**OUR dire qu’y a d’ la pomme, on peut pas dire qu’y a d’ la pomme. . . . Mais, pour dire qu’y a point d’pomme, on peut pas dire qu’y a point d’pomme.”

Ainsi doit répondre un Normand, interrogé sur la récolte, si les ramures des vergers ploient sous le poids des fruits.

“On pouvait pas dire qu’y avait point d’ pomme” dans le plant de César Bondaux. Et c’est ce que pensait le vieux, en étayant, aidé de son fils Saturnin, les branches trop chargées qui balayaient presque le chaume d’avoine.

Les deux hommes avaient profité d’une après-midi sèche et sereine, un dimanche, pour faire cette besogne, car tous deux étaient ouvriers-bourreliers, de leur état,—et possédaient seulement quelques lopins de terre, cultivés à moments perdus.

— Il faudra sacrifier une demi-journée pour venir fauler ce petit arbre-là, décida le père Bondaux. C’est de la pomme “éribes”. Voilà qu’elle commence à tomber.

— Il y en a pas mal, remarqua Saturnin, en comptant du regard les balles d’or luisantes, parmi les feuilles déjà roussies et rares. Mais c’est les pommiers de carcasse qui donneront le plus. Je parie qu’on ramasse soixante-dix rasieres sous les trois.

— Il n’était que temps de les soulever, fit observer César, soulevant avec précaution, sur une perche fourchue, des rameaux où les pommes de carcasse, menues, étaient tassées comme les graine ambrés d’une grappe.

SS—May—9

— Il y a de l’orgueil aussi, reprit Saturnin, hésitant . . . mais pas tellement, tout de même.

Les pommiers d’orgueil, moins étalés en ombelles que leurs voisins, ressemblaient à des rosiers pourpres, énormes et surabondamment fleuris. Le père et le fils, contents, remontèrent dans la carriole, attlée d’un bidet, qui les conduisait d’ordinaire à leur travail, dans les villages ou les fermes éloignés.

Quand ils revinrent, pour récolter les pommes “éribes”, c’est-à-dire hatives, la mère Bondaux les accompagnait.

— Crois-tu qu’elles ont augmenté? interrogea César, dont les petits yeux verts fouillaient avidement la ramure.

— Je ne pense pas, fit Saturnin, qui, le nez levé, tourmentait sa moustache rousse.

— Ah! dame, intervint la mère Clémentine avec un clignement de paupières, le plant du Bohémien n’est pas loin. . . . En allant voir si ses arbres, à lui, font bien. . .

— Surtout qu’il y va voir au clair de lune . . . grommela Saturnin.

Le Bohémien—de son vrai nom Jules Pagnard—avait la réputation de ne rien laisser perdre, même le bien d’autrui, et de “rouler la brouette, la nuit” afin de corriger l’injustice du sort qui l’avait fait pauvre, à son gré, en jardins et en terre à blé.

* * *

— Dis donc, César, as-tu passé par notre plant, tantôt? demandait la mère Bondaux en posant la soupe sur la table.

— J'y ai passé, oui. C'est le tour des pommiers d'orgueil, à présent. Il en manque bien une rasière et demi, déjà sur les deux.

— Bien! moi, j'ai vu le tas de pommes du Bohémien. Il entra dans sa grange, pour tirer du cidre. Il n'a pas pu refermer la porte assez vite pour m'empêcher de jeter un coup d'œil. C'est bien lui qui nous vole, puisqu'il y a de l'orgueil dans son tas et qu'il n'en a pas un seul arbre.

— La lune est quasiment pleine. On ne raterait pas son coup de fusil, cette nuit, gronda Saturnin en regardant l'arme accrochée au-dessus de la cheminée.

— Tais-toi, mon garçon, tais-toi, souffla craintivement Clémentine, tu sais bien que la loi ne serait pas pour toi.

— Et qu'on ne risque pas de tuer un homme, pour du "fruitage", déclara Bondaux, l'air sévère.

— Alors, faut se laisser dévaliser? — Je n'ai pas dit ça.

Bondaux réfléchit, puis reprit:

— Quand tu auras soupe, tu graisseras les roues des deux brouettes, de façon qu'elles ne chantent plus.

— Et puis, après?

— Après, mon garçon, moi je te montrerai se que tu devras faire.

Onze heures ayant sonné, les deux hommes s'en furent, marchant à la muette des terres labourées, vers une pette "bossière" tout proche des deux plants. Tapis dans un taillis, ils attendirent.

Enfin, une grêle silhouette humaine se profila, venant à eux et menant une brouette, silencieuse autant que les leurs.

— Pourquoi ne m'as tu pas permis de prendre mon fusil? chuchota Saturnin.

Le Bohémien, sous le plant des Bondaux, cueillait les pommes d'orgueil qu'il fourrait dans un sac.

Lorsqu'il fut bien en train. César surgit du bois et, froissant bruyamment les chaumes, il gagna l'autre champ, où il se mit à dépouiller les branches basses d'un pommier de pigeon. Saturnin l'imita. Le Bohémien eut une hésitation brève . . . , puis il continua sa besogne.

Les trois sacs furent pleins à la fois.

— Bon! s'exclama le père Bondaux, voilà comme on travaille, au soleil des loups! . . . Nous avons fait erreur, Saturnin! . . . C'est les pommes du voisin que nous avons cueillies.

— Bah! . . . puisque le voisin avait fait erreur avant nous, il n'y a pas grand mal, riposta Saturnin.

Jules Pagnard désigna sa brouette chargée.

— Je n'ai qu'une rasière contre deux prononça-t-il, hardiment.

— Oui, mais, voilà! railla le père Bondaux. Ce n'est peut-être pas la première fois que tu te trompes, mon garçon?

— Ce qui est fait est fait, grommela le Bohémien.

Et les trois brouettes, de conserve, roulèrent vers le village.

* * *

Les Bondaux et le Bohémien n'avaient jamais pressé de meilleur cidre que cette année-là.

— J'ai des sauvabeons assez drus, que je voudrais greffer en pomme d'orgueil, dit Jules à César. Tu ne me refuses pas des greffes?

— Moi? non, bien sûr! Pourvu que tu me laisses en couper quelques-unes sur ton beau pommier de pigeon. Moi aussi, j'ai des arbres à greffer, consentit César, sans rancune.



The Literary Drama

By George Jean Nathan

IT is jocosely related of Professor George Pierce Baker, the Harvard J. Berg Esenwein, that on his frequent visits in New York with his theatrical acquaintances he is so eager to have himself regarded as "one of the boys" that his elaborate conversational indulgence in the Rialto stage lingo makes it almost impossible for them to understand him. And it is a well-known fact that Professor Brander Matthews, the Columbia Lotta, is similarly so eager to pass himself off as anything but a college professor that his assiduity in expounding the "show business" at the expense of the drama of literary splendour amounts almost to a form of insanity. It is ever the nature of the leopard to wish to change his spots. Ludwig Uhrgehäuse, son of old Herman Uhrgehäuse, the horse-radish importer, thus becomes Llewellyn Urquhart, corresponding secretary of New Rochelle Vigilantes; the aspiring coloured girl becomes Mr. Mennen's best customer; and Professor Richard Burton, the University of Minnesota æsthetic *table d'hôte*, as head of the Drama League endorses George M. Cohan.

The popular suspicion of the so-called literary drama and the public disrepute into which it has been brought in America are attributable not, as is commonly held, to the college professor who is a college professor but to the college professor who, for all his being ineradicably a college professor by blood and instinct, seeks to mask himself in other, and perhaps more worldly, guises. The former, as I have met with and known him, is a postureless, likable, well-schooled and often

anything but unimaginative man: his opinions of the theater and drama are interesting and worth listening to. A number of such fellows—Allard of Harvard, Lewisohn of Ohio State, White of Cornell, Henderson of North Carolina, Nettleton of Yale, Gayley of California, to name a few—are at once reserved and aloof scholars to whom the theater and drama are an adventure in scholarship. But for every such man, for every such dignified student and interpreter of the drama, there are a dozen vainglorious and impracticable bladders who scurry to every McAlpin Hotel, Biltmore and Keen's Chop House banquet, to every side-street reception to a foreign celebrity and to every periodic free lettuce sandwich by way of exhibiting their persons and their notions to the gaze of cosmopolis. It is this type of college professor, thirsting for publicity and itching to have himself accepted as a mundane and practical-minded fellow, who intermittently shoots off strained hors d'œuvres eulogies of Willard Mack, together with such dessert philosophies as "the best play is the play that appeals to the greatest number of people" and "immediate success is the proper aim of the playwright in any age." It is this type of college professor who, prancing in the pages of the periodicals and newspaper literary supplements, contributes to the idiocy of impressionable readers and assists in lowering the standards of the theater against the theater's will.

The newspaper play reviewers, realizing perhaps—and accurately—that one of the easiest ways to gain a scholarly reputation is to praise scholarly things, are ever extravagantly hospita-

ble to the so-called literary drama. Let Gorki or Tolstoi, Maeterlinck or Stephen Phillips bore them into a state approximating coma, yet will they regularly trot out the faithful "admitted masterpiece that everyone who loves the theater must see" stencil. The commercial manager—if perhaps only in the spirit of the little boy who after cabbaging a penny out of his mother's pocket-book guiltily sneaks up behind her and startles her with an unexpected and somewhat puzzling kiss—yet intersperses his Cosmo Hamiltons with Masefield, his Augustus Thomases with Shaw, and his Samuel Shipmans with Drinkwater. And the public, for all the slings and arrows poised at it, gives its lucrative patronage to a just and fair share of St. John Ervines, Sem Benellis, Eugene O'Neills, John Drinkwaters, John Galsworthys and J. M. Synges. These, in any debasing of the standards of the theater, are not to blame. That blame is rather the portion of the very men to whom one might—did one not know them—rightly look for an ardent companionship of all that is fine and noble in literature, and of all that is fine and noble in the theater. Yet these are the very men who—by virtue of their cheap pushings toward self-exploitation—currently work a greater critical damage to the art of drama and to the art of the theater than any other existing force.

There is scarcely a college in the land that doesn't boast at least one such intellectual Bim the Button Man. The portrait of this professorial Bim is immediately recognizable. Very often, he is found to be a man of some taste and considerable learning. Very often, he is found to be a man who, until the avidity for banquet and lecture invitations and publicity besieges him, has conducted himself and his opinions in a sane and bracing manner. But the first time he sinks a tooth into a public lamb chop, or takes his stand in front of a dozen camp-stools filled with St. Louis brewers' wives, Urbana school-teachers and suburban Stanislawskis, or gets a letter from the editor of the *New York*

Times literary supplement asking him to review a book by Bernard Shaw or Gordon Craig, he is a goner. He appreciates—and correctly—that to say what his audience expects him to say—that is, to uphold, with scholarly reserve, the dignity of art and letters—will make him the cynosure of all snores. He appreciates—and correctly—that if he is to bring himself out of the obscurity of his class-room walls even temporarily, he must inject into himself a rich complement of O. Henry surprise coda-kicks. He appreciates, in a word, that a college professor who acts like a college professor in public is as dead an attraction as "Paul Kauvar." So what does he do?

He does what is as plain as the nose on your face. He throws back his ears, wiggles them, slashes about him with his tail, and conducts himself generally as little like a college professor as is humanly possible for him. He chokes back Racine and, in a voice that frightens the waiters, boldly announces to the surrounding nesselrode pudding eaters that Sammie Shipman is on the Right Track. He tucks Oscar Wilde securely away in the corner of his brain and, in tones that set the Egyptian onyx earrings of the St. Louis brewers' wives trembling, proclaims that Shakespeare never wrote without his eye on the box-office and was just as good a showman as Jake Shubert. He swallows his honest belief as not sufficiently newsy and, in an article three columns long, proves that Gordon Craig is the inferior of Unitt and Wickes, Clara Tice and the Baroness De Meyer. . . .

These monkeyshines he does not negotiate merely for what little money there may be in them. It is notoriety that he primarily seeks, for notoriety is the blood of life to him. To it, he will sacrifice anything. He wants to be known to the outside world; he must be known to the outside world. To live and die known only to the yearly few hundred Grand Street seekers for knowledge on Corneille and Lope de Vega, that would be unbearable! To live and die with only an occasional

paper on "The Recrudescence of the Proletarian Aesthetic in the French Drama of the Seventeenth Century" in *Harper's Magazine*, how sour a fate! To live and die, regarded by the jolly outside world as a mere scholar, as a man whose blood is gray, as a fellow who honestly prefers Congreve and Wycherley to Conroy and Le Maire and Molière to Molly King, what would the wife's sister think! . . . And thus Sigmund, in Vienna, chalks up another name.

But enough of this. What of the deprecated literary drama itself? No subject of the theater is burdened with more sophistries and beset by more buncombes. Due very largely to the Bim gas, a large portion of the public has been persuaded to believe that any drama written by a literary man is "literary drama" and that only such dramas as are written by men who began life as stock company actors and developed their writing careers by composing vaudeville sketches in which Gus, the plumber, arriving at the height of a fashionable reception, is mistaken by the hostess for Lord Algernon Chichester, the owner of Rosebush, the Derby winner, are the Real Thing. The result is that the susceptible public, somewhat against its natural impulse—since it is ever attracted by "names," and since literary men more often have these "names"—is frightened away from such excellent shows as are provided by so-called literary drama like Chesterton's "Magic" and are steered instead toward such tedious shows as are provided by simon-pure showshop drama like Hartley Manners' "One Night in Rome." Yet the former, even with second-rate casting, is from any standpoint a much better Broadway show than the latter, with first-rate casting.

Good drama, of whatever nature, is good literature. Good literature, in the majority of relevant cases, is good drama. The theory that in order to make good literature theatrically dramatic it is necessary to treat it with the cathartics of Mr. Owen Davis is

the theory that in order to convert good drama into literature it is necessary to treat it with the sedatives of Mr. William De Morgan. Arnold Bennett's "Sacred and Profane Love," currently on view in the Morosco Theater, is poor drama not because Mr. Bennett is a literary man but because, in this instance, he is a dramatist. The purely literary passages in the play—as, for example, the admirably written seduction episode in the first act—are vital, forceful, deeply moving drama. The purely dramatic passages in the play—as, for example, the morphine fiend horse-pistol roughhouse in the third act—are absurd, titterful, without effect. Hamlet's soliloquy—literature pure and simple—is twenty times as dynamic in drama as all the long third-act sheer theater speeches of all the Kaintucks in all the "Palmy Days" that all the Augustus Thomases have ever brewed.

It has been written of Arnold Bennett—as it is always written of a literary man when he enters the theater—that his play would have been a better play (the adjective is used in the critical, rather than the commercial sense) had he possessed, in addition to his skill as a man of letters, the skill of a practised play-maker. Assuming that such criticism is composed for the information of persons above the intellectual and emotional grade of morons, what could be more imbecile? Bennett has a set of characters, each developed as he elects. He has a fable. He has the settings for those characters and that fable. He has his embellishment of mild philosophy, mild reflection and mild humour. The whole he presents for what its separate and combined ingredients are worth. If, presented as he presents it, it interests his audience, good. If, presented as he presents it, it fails to interest his audience, not so good. But what could be more silly than to urge that he might have more greatly interested an intelligent audience that is at present conceivably not greatly interested if he had conducted his simple fable, for the benefit of that

intelligent audience, more in accordance with Sardou and Pinero jumping-jack principles?

Bennett's play is a poor play because it is builded of what are intrinsically Hall Caine materials. For that reason, it doesn't interest the more sophisticated spectator. The notion that this spectator would, however, be very much interested in the same play if it had been written with the technical skill of a Charles Klein is something like the notion that the philosophical ratiocinations of Dr. Frank Crane might be made highly appealing to an intelligent person if only they were set forth in the more graceful, plausible and ingratiating style of James Branch Cabell . . . If, further and irrelevantly, the phrase "better play" has in mind the box-office, the criticism is not less idiotic. The Bennett play, as I write, is playing to a weekly box-office of more than sixteen thousand dollars.

The bad literary drama is not primarily bad drama, but bad literature. The belief that Mr. Percy Mackaye—whose latest masterpiece, "George Washington," is most God-awful stuff—is a literary man who writes literary drama is not without its humours. Mr. Mackaye is not a literary man, nor does he write literary drama. He is a man with all the manner of the literary man and all the talent of the third-rate German demi-poets like Fuhrmann, Stucken and Victor Hahn who would seem to believe that the literary and poetic drama is a form of drama suited only to a new-fangled kind of theater building with its stage where its lavatories ought to be, and vice versa, or to any cow-pasture or bush league baseball lot temporarily metamorphosed into an ancient Athenian grove by setting up half a dozen Chinese lanterns, two French flags, several pots of red-fire, some rubber-plants and a border of James G. Blaine campaign torches. In the exercises of literature and literary achievement, Mr. Mackaye, if he may be said to stand not exactly next to the stove in the rear of the room, yet surely may be said to stand near

enough to feel the heat upon his Little Henri. No man in America has posed more as a figure in letters, and no man has produced less literature. No man has more magically, the moment he has taken it in hand, transformed a pen into an auger. He is the greatest bore that American letters has produced. And the notion that his high-school hallelujahs constitute anything even remotely describable as literary drama is akin to the contention that they constitute literature in the first place.

Literary drama—if the phrase must be used—is simply drama that is written, as opposed, in the case of other drama, to drama that is carpentered. The two may, indeed, be one and the same, as in the instance of St. John Ervine's currently played and excellent "Jane Clegg," or Galsworthy's "Justice," or Dunsany's "Gods of the Mountain"—or, to descend quite a few flights, Booth Tarkington's "Clarence." The phrase literary drama is more often than not mere yokel tautology, like full dress suit, high silk hat or champagne wine. If a play is a first-rate play, it is literature, though it do a business of \$18,000 a week and be written by a man who hasn't had an essay or a poem or a novel to his credit. George Ade's "College Widow" is every bit as much literary drama as Maeterlinck's "The Betrothal," and a devil of a lot more. Edward Knoblauch's "Faun" and "Kismet" are literary drama even as Stephen Phillips' "Herod" or Synge's "Playboy." Indeed, I am not at all sure that Avery Hopwood's good laugh show, "Our Little Wife," and Montague Glass' Potash and Perlmutter belly-shakers are not also literary drama.

I have never been able to suppress the conviction that the worst play that a lay theater person like Willa Sibert Cather might write would not be a very much better play than the best play a practised theatrical technician like Augustus Thomas might write. George Birmingham, knowing utterly nothing of the accepted rigmarole of the stage,

wrote, in his maiden "General John Regan," a vastly finer play than the expert Henry Arthur Jones wrote in his entire lifetime. When the talented literary man writes a poor play it is less because he doesn't know how to write a play than because the materials out of which he essays to write that play are, even in the hands of an experienced dramatist, inaptly suited to the theater. It is as absurd to suppose that any sort of material may be made adroitly and conveniently to fit the form of the theater as to suppose that any sort of material may be made adroitly and conveniently to fit the form of lyric verse. Let Sardou have tried to make a theater play out of the story of Cassiopeia, or Pinero to have dramatized the Martian tales of H. G. Wells!

The so-called literary drama, in short, is a bugaboo used by the professorial Bims and the producers of torso shows to scare adult children. And when these hanswursts use the designation they are very careful always to employ it with reference to some such admittedly lugubrious dingus as Percy Mackaye's "Bird Masque," which is neither literature nor drama, and equally careful always to withhold it from some such admittedly rollicking dish as Shaw's "Caesar and Cleopatra," which is both.

II

The literary drama lately produced in New York is of divers species. As observed, it ranges all the way from such authentic literary drama as Ervine's "Jane Clegg" to such spurious and snoozy "literary drama" as Mackaye's "George Washington," and from such venerable things as "Richard III" and such dignified efforts as Masefield's "Tragedy of Man" to such box-office pricklers as Bennett's "Sacred and Profane Love" and such parrot-wit ventriloquisms as Philip Moeller's "Sophie."

This "Sophie," for example, is largely a mere stringing together of

the snappy retorts of the celebrated Arnould readily culled from the many volumes on that fair loose one. These *repatees*, often reprinted in the magazines and newspapers in series of articles on historical charmers by Thornton Hall, Albert Payson Terhune, et al., are in this instance cuckooed together with a slice of "Backstairs Memoirs of the Courts of Europe" and the whole passed off for a comedy of original resource and wit. A herculean effort to fetch smartness with Greenwich Village *double entente* and to derive drama out of such seasoned dialogue as "You must be mad!"—"I was never saner in my life than I am at this moment!" marks the proceedings. The author, as in his other more recent writings for the theater, may be discerned behind the manuscript striving sedulously for what he regards as that *précieux*, that *dégagé*, that *je ne sais quoi*—you know, that—that *verve*, that *éblouissement*, that—how shall one say it?—that *esprit*, that *vertu*, that *something* . . . But, in place of that something, what he actually achieves is simply an amateurish and artificial historical comedy the artificiality of which is less intentional than unintentional. Miss Emily Stevens has the role of Sophie and acts it, as is her wont, in the staccato, nervous, fidgetty, cue-jumping manner which invariably suggests that she has a difficultly curable stomach-ache and is impatient to get off the stage as quickly as possible.

Mackaye's George Washington is a Y. M. C. A. lecturer dressed up for a Beaux Arts ball. As Mackaye pictures him, the greatest man America has ever produced is a humourless elocutionist given periodically to throwing his cape over his shoulder in the manner of a provincial actor playing "Ruy Blas" and to reciting strophes from Appleton's Primary Grade History of the American Revolution in the voice of an undertaker. There is no more life to the character than there is to a bottle of Apollinaris that has been opened for an hour. What with the current wholesale occupation of our stages by

this historical gallery of Washingtons, Abraham Lincolns, John Wilkes Booths, Searsons, Alexander Hamiltons, Sophie Arnoulds, Von Glucks, Martha Washingtons, General Grants, Patrick Henrys, Lawrence Washingtons, Myles Coopers, Tom Paines, James Monroes, Marquises de Lafayette, Betsy Rosses and General Knoxes, and what with the impending Drinkwater General Lees, John Browns and Oliver Cromwells, one begins to sigh again for such of our dear old stage friends as Skinnem and Cheatem, the lawyers, Dinkelspiel, the concertina manufacturer, Abner Witherbee, the cruel landlord, and O'Flaherty, the Central Office detective.

III

The Theater Guild's production of "Jane Clegg" is a fine accomplishment. The play itself, as already noted, is a fine accomplishment. And the performance of Mr. Dudley Digges in the role of the weak and vainglorious traveling clerk whose pitiable search for happiness ends in his wife's rainbow of tears is a fine accomplishment. Rarely in the modern drama has the sardonic comedy that is so often the aura of tragedy been more dexterously suggested and projected. And every one of the dramatist's values has here been admirably realized by the director Reicher. The play has long been available in book form and is well-known to the general reader. The performance is eminently worth the eye of that person who relishes the modern theater at what approximates its best.

Of the Bennett play, little more need be added to what has already been said. Save for the excellent first-act scene alluded to, and for a very brief dialogue between the heroine and a beauish Polonius in the second act, the manuscript represents Bennett, the dollar-wooer, rather than Bennett, the artist. However, the prevailing contention that Bennett debased his play for box-office purposes in converting the tragic ending of the novel from

which the play was derived into a so-called happy ending, is not fair. This so-called happy ending is quite as logical as the other ending—indeed, more so. And it is entirely probable that Bennett honestly brought himself to this conclusion in the space of time intervening between his composition of the novel ("The Book of Carlotta") and his decision to make a stage play out of it.

A large share of the interest provoked by the acted play is due to Miss Elsie Ferguson, who occupies the central role. It is quite true, as everyone says, that Miss Ferguson's quavering, sad-throated manner of speech becomes monotonous (she reads every line in the play, whether it be drama, comedy or what not, as if it were a selection from the Bible); it is quite true, as everyone says, that she often acts light comedy as if her mother were dying in the next room and her heart were breaking; but I would nevertheless rather watch her, with all her critical faults, than many a more able technician. She is a charming woman as she comes over the footlights—and that is something.

IV

Masefield's "Tragedy of Nan" is a distinguished piece of dramatic writing but, God forgive me, I find it very bore-some stuff in the theater. I have seen it played twice and each time, though my head has impressively warned and chided the rest of me, I have experienced difficulty in keeping my attention where it should have been. Why, I don't exactly know. Each one of us, I suppose, has his inexplicable artistic inhibitions. They are idiotic, undoubtedly, but there they are. Personally, Masefield—for all my critical appreciation of him, for all my regard for certain of his achievements in dramatic writing—fails to warm me once I get into a seat before him. I know, even then, that he is an artist; but somehow I don't seem to give a hang. Hermann Heijermans very often has the same effect upon me. So, in art,

has Rubens; so, in music, frequently Schumann; and so, in literature, Catulle Mendès. As I say, don't ask me why. I don't myself know.

Brieux's nineteen-year-old "La Robe Rouge" presently receives an American production under the title, "The Letter of the Law," with Mr. Lionel Barrymore starred. There is a certain force still remaining in the old propaganda bones, but the play—like all of Brieux's indignant theses pieces—is better suited to the platform of Cooper Union than to the platform of the modern theater. In that theater, these pieces impress one very much as a loud persistent talker, whatever the content of his talk, impresses one in the drawing-room. There may be a place for such things in the theater, but not in the theater which one sets one's faith upon. That theater, when it preaches at all, preaches in terms of wit. Mr. John D. Williams has given the play a satisfactory presentation save in the instances of the casting of Mr. Russ Whytal and Miss Doris Rankin.

V

Mr Arthur Hopkins' production of Shakespeare's "Passing Show of 1483," more generally known as "Richard III," marks what is undoubtedly the highest level that American stagecraft has yet reached. With the aid of Robert E. Jones, the producer has contrived to project a series of stage pictures that are among the most beautiful of the modern theater; the lighting, indeed, I have never seen equalled. Mr. John Barrymore's Richard is an admirable performance. This actor has studied and worked hard; his progress is steady. I am not an ancient, but in my own thirty-eight years I have not witnessed a suaver instance of Shakespearian interpretation. Nor, in those thirty-eight years, a less competent supporting company.

As with the majority of Hopkins productions, much of the attendant criticism has sported a false-face. It has been indignantly argued by one of his hazlitts, for example, that Hopkins has

committed a most red-hot and unforgivable *faux pas* in modernizing the delivery of the text, in substituting a reasonable composure for the old toothache manner. "This," explodes our hazlitt, "is to act Shakespeare in the mood of Henry Arthur Jones! The blood and fire, the torrential expressions of emotion, the storm and stress which constitute the existence of these abnormal folk of a barbaric day—these Hopkins never suggests! . . . The curses of the Duchess of York do not echo in their tone the revulsion that the outraged mother feels against such an unnatural son . . . Nor could Anne justly syllable her complaints against the murderer of her father and husband with the complacency that Hopkins permits! . . . etc., etc." What we engage here is once again the William Winter notion that poignant feeling is an emotion not of the heart but of the lungs, that the profounder the tragedy the louder must be the yelling. Ah, the wet blanket of tradition. It would have us believe that Shakespeare, alone of all the dramatists who ever lived, permits of but one interpretation, and that the literal one. It would contend that a horse-car, being a horse-car and having always been a horse-car, should never be run by electricity. There is no sound reason why Shakespeare's "Richard III" should not be played in the mood of Henry Arthur Jones' "Judah" or "The Silver King." Or if there is, I have yet to hear it.

VI

Mr Ziegfeld's "Girls of 1920," the new roof revue, is a thing of superb colour, and another attestation to the undisputed preeminence of this producer in the field of the girl show. The leading feature of the present exhibition is a choice imported bit light Kathleen Martyn. "Musk," by Leonie de Souiny, is the second worst play of the year. "The Blue Flame," by the Messrs. Hobart and Willard, with Theda Bara, the movie vamp, in the star role, is the worst.

More Notes From a Diary

By H. L. Mencken

I

March 15.

IT is easy enough to understand the impulse which prompted Dreiser to write "Hey Rub-a-Dub-Dub," his new book, of essays and fulminations all compact (*Boni-Liveright*). There come times in every sentient man's life when he must simply unload his ideas, or bust like a star-shell in the highroad. If he is at that end of the scale which touches the rising ladder of the *Simiidae* he becomes a Socialist on a soap-box or joins the Salvation Army; if he is literate and has a soul he writes a book. Hence the great, whirring, infernal machines which chew up the forests of Canada, now and then salting the dose with the leg or arm of a Canuck. Hence the huge ink industry, consuming five million tons of bone-black a year. Hence democracy, Bolshevism, the moral order of the world. Hence sorrow. Hence literature.

In every line of "Hey Rub-a-Dub-Dub" there is evidence of the author's antecedent agony. One pictures him sitting up all night in his sinister studio down in Tenth street, wrestling horribly with the insoluble, trying his darndest to penetrate the unknowable. One o'clock strikes, and the fire sputters. Ghosts stalk in the room, fanning the yellow candle-light with their abominable breath—the spooks of all the men who have died for ideas since the world began—Socrates, Savonarola, Bruno (not Guido, but Giordano), Ravailac, Sir Roger Casement, John Alexander Dowie, Dr. Crippen. Two o'clock. What, then, is the truth about marriage? Is it, as Grover Cleveland said, a grand

sweet song, or is it, as the gals in the Village say, a hideous mockery and masquerade, invented by Capitalism to enslave the soul of woman—a legalized *Schweinerei*, worse than politics, almost as bad as the moving-pictures? Three o'clock. Was Marx right or wrong, a seer or a mere nose-puller? Was his name, in fact, actually Marx, or was it Marcus? From what ghetto did he escape, and cherishing what grudge against mankind? Aha, the Huneker complex: *cherchez le Juif!* (I confess at once: my great-grandpa, Moritz, was rector of the *Oheb Shalom Schul* in Grodno). Three o'clock . . .

Back to Pontius Pilate! *Quod est veritas?* Try to define it. Look into it. Break it into its component parts. What remains is a pale gray vapor, an impalpable emanation, the shadow of a shadow. Think of the brains that have gone to wreck struggling with the problem—cerebrums as large as cauliflowers, cerebellums as perfect as pomegranates. Think of the men jailed, clubbed, hanged, burned at the stake—not for embracing error, but for embracing the *wrong* error. Think of the innumerable caravan of Burlesons, Mitchell Palmers, Torquemadas, Cotton Mathers . . . Four o'clock. The fire burns low in the grate. A gray fog without. Across the street two detectives rob a drunken man. Up at Tarrytown John D. Rockefeller snores in his damp Baptist bed, dreaming gaudily that he is young again and mashed on a girl named Marie. At Sing Sing forty head of Italians are waiting to be electrocuted. There is a memorial service for Charles Garvice in Westminster Abbey. The Comstocks raid the Elsie books. Luden-

dorff is elected Archbishop of Canterbury. A poor working-girl, betrayed by Moe, the boss's son, drowns herself in the Aquarium. It is late, ah me: nearly four thirty . . . Who the deuce, then, is God? What is in all this talk of a future life, infant damnation, the Ouija board, Mortal Mind? Dr. Jacques Loeb is the father of a dozen bull-frogs. Is the news biological or theological? What became of the Albigenses? Are they in heaven, in purgatory or in hell? . . . Five o'clock. Boys cry the *Evening Journal*. Is it today's or tomorrow's? The question of transubstantiation remains. There is, too, neo-transcendentalism . . . In Munich they talk of *Expressionismus* . . . Poof! . . .

It is easy, as I say, to imagine a man beset by such reflections, and urged irresistibly to work them out on paper. Unluckily, the working out is not always as simple a business as it looks. Dreiser's first impulse as novelist, I dare say, was to do it in novels—to compose fictions full of ideas, saying something, teaching something, exposing something, destroying something. But the novelist also happened to be an artist, and at once the artist entered an effective caveat against that pollution. A work of art with ideas in it is as sorry a monster as a pretty girl full of Latin. The aim of a work of art is not to make one think painfully, but to make one feel beautifully. What is the idea in "Jennie Gerhardt"? Who knows but God? But in "Jennie Gerhardt" there is feeling—profound, tragic, exquisite. It is a thing of poignant and yet delicate emotions, like Brahms' Fourth symphony. It lies in a sort of intellectual fourth dimension. It leaves a memory that is vivid and somehow caressing, and wholly free from doubts, questionings, head-scratchings . . . So Dreiser decided to make a serious book of it, a book of unalloyed ratiocination, a book in the manner of Herbert Spencer. The result is "Hey Rub-a-Dub-Dub"—solemn stuff, with never a leer of beauty in it—in fact, almost furious. Once or twice it grows a bit lyrical; once or twice it rises to the imaginatively grotesque. But

in the main it is plain exposition—a book of speculation and protest. He calls it himself "a book of the mystery and terror and wonder of life." I suspect that he lifted this subtitle from an old review of H. L. M. If so, then welcome! From him I have got more than is to be described in words and more than I can ever pay.

But what of the thing itself? Is it good stuff? My feeling is that it isn't. More, my feeling is that Dreiser is no more fitted to do a book of speculation than Joseph Conrad, say, is fitted to do a college yell. His talents simply do not lie in that direction. He lacks the mental agility, the insinuating suavity, the necessary capacity for romanticising a syllogism. Ideas themselves are such sober things that a sober man had better let them alone. What they need, to become bearable to a human race that hates them and is afraid of them, is the artful juggling of a William James, the insurance-agent persuasiveness of an Henri Bergson, the boob-bumping talents of a Martin Luther—best of all, the brilliant, almost Rabelaisian humor of a Nietzsche. Nietzsche went out into the swamp much further than any other explorer; he left such pallbearers of the spirit as Spencer, Comte, Descartes and even Kant all shivering on the shore. And yet he never got bogged, and he never lost the attention of his audience. What saved him was the plain fact that he always gave a superb show—as good, almost, as a hanging. He converted the problem of evil into a melodrama with nine villains; he made of epistemology a sort of intellectual bed-room farce; he amalgamated Christianity and the music of Offenbach . . . Well, Dreiser is quite devoid of that gift. Skepticism, in his hands, is never charming; it is simply despairing. His criticism of God lacks ingenuity and audacity. Earnestly pursuing the true, he too often unearths the merely obvious, which is sometimes not true at all. One misses the jauntiness of the accomplished duellist; his manner is rather that of the honest householder repelling burglars with a table-leg. In brief, it is

enormously serious and painstaking stuff, but seldom very interesting stuff, and never delightful stuff. The sorrows of the world become the sorrows of Dreiser himself, and then the sorrows of his reader. He remains, in the last analysis, the novelist rather than the philosopher. He is vastly less a Schopenhauer than a Werther.

But a book by Dreiser is a book by Dreiser, and so one reads it with curiosity if not with delectation. In part, at least, the same motive must get one through Huneker's "Bedouins" (*Scribner*). Let us go back a bit. In "Iconoclasts" the place of honor was held by Henrik Ibsen, in "Overtones" by Richard Strauss, in "Egoists" by Stendhal. In "Bedouins" it is held by Mary Garden! Here is—well, if not a great drop, then at least a great change. An uneasy consciousness of it seems to haunt the author himself; he devotes several pages to answering the charge that he is in love with La Garden—that his critical parts have become sicklied o'er with the pale cast of a private devotion. In love with her or not—what are the odds? A man surely has a right to fix his eye upon the fair—and who could imagine a more seemly amour than one between the critic who has made the arts possible in the Republic and the artist who has made one of them popular? The thing, in fact, is almost too logical to be romantic; the right-thinking would applaud it, and so ruin it. But lovely though she may be, with a heart of gold and a shoulder like the Taj Mahal, I am one who doubts that an opera singer is worth all that polyglot rhapsody—all the enthusiasm that used to empty upon the three immortal B's. Back to Bach, and if not to Bach, then at least to Brahms! Mummer-worship is William-Winterism; the old boy began mooning every time he saw a pretty ear. The last time I witnessed Huneker he was wearing the purple-and-gilt rosette of the National Institute of Arts and Letters—the honest tribute of Robert W. Chambers, the Yale faculty, and Henry van Dyke. Something seems to have gone with the tribute.

The rest of his book is agreeable stuff but not important—Anatole France following Caruso, David Belasco mentioned in the same breath with Max Reinhardt and Gordon Craig. Seven grotesque short stories, all of them good, are at the end. A *scherzo* in sad and turbulent days—forgivable once, but not twice Carl Van Vechten, in "In the Garret" (*Knopf*), tries on what were once the Huneker shoes. He is full of a fantastic and almost fabulous sort of learning; he unearths, like the Huneker of 1895, strange carcasses from the dungeons of the arts—Isaac Albéniz, Philip Thicknesse, Frer Arnoulx of Rouen, Karl Eberwein, Porphire-Désiré Hennebert, even worse. He champions Sir Arthur Sullivan eloquently and with effect. He delivers himself of inconceivable heresies, alleging, for example, that "Tod und Verklärung" is banal. I wonder if Van Vechten, gloating so vastly over Thicknesse, has ever read the memoirs of Richard Cumberland, London, 1807. . . . For the rest, he praises Oscar Hammerstein, Mimi Aguglia and the Borough of Manhattan. A volume of uneven parts, but mostly very amusing.

II

March 16.

THE backwardness of the art of biography in These States is made shiningly visible by the fact that we have yet to see a first-rate biography of either Lincoln or Whitman. Of Lincolniana, of course, there is no end, nor is there any end to the hospitality of those who collect it. Some time ago a publisher told me that there are three kinds of books that never, under any circumstances, lose money—first, detective stories; secondly, volumes on spiritualism, occultism and other such claptrap, and thirdly, books on Lincoln. But despite all the vast mass of Lincolniana and the constant discussion of old Abe in periodicals, even so elemental a problem as that of his religious faith—surely an important matter in any competent biography—is yet but half solved. Here,

for example, is the Rev. William E. Barton, grappling with it for more than four hundred large pages in "The Soul of Abraham Lincoln" (*Doran*). It is a lengthy inquiry—the rev. pastor, in truth, shows a good deal of the habitual garrulity of his order—but it is never downright tedious. On the contrary, it is curious and amusing, and I have read it with steady interest, including even the appendices. Unluckily, the author does not finish the business before him. Was Lincoln a Christian? Did he believe in the Divinity of Christ? I am left in doubt. He was very polite about it, and very cautious, as befitted a politician in need of Christian votes, but how much genuine conviction was in that politeness? And if his occasional references to Christ were thus open to question, what of his rather vague avowals of belief in a personal God and in the immortality of the soul? Herndon and some of his other close friends always maintained that he was an atheist—that is, that he denied any divine intervention in the affairs of men. Dr. Barton argues that this atheism was simply disbelief in the idiotic Methodist and Baptist dogmas of his time—that nine Christian churches out of ten, if he were alive today, would admit him to their high privileges and prerogatives without anything worse than a few warning coughs. As for me, I still wonder.

The growth of the Lincoln legend is truly amazing. He becomes the American solar myth, the chief butt of American credulity and sentimentality. Washington, of late years, has been perceptibly humanized; every schoolboy now knows that he used to swear a good deal, and was a sharp trader, and had a quick eye for a pretty girl. But meanwhile the varnishers and veneers have been busily converting Abe into a plaster saint, thus making him fit for adoration in the chautauquas and Y. M. C. A.'s. All the popular pictures of him show him in his robes of state, and wearing an expression fit for a man about to be hanged. There is, so far as I know, not a single portrait of him

showing him smiling—and yet he must have cackled a good deal, first and last: who ever heard of a story-teller who didn't? Worse, there is an obvious effort to pump all his human weaknesses out of him, and so leave him a mere moral apparition, a sort of amalgam of John Wesley and the Holy Ghost. What could be more absurd? Lincoln, in point of fact, was a practical politician of long experience and high talents, and by no means cursed with inconvenient ideals. On the contrary, his career in the Illinois Legislature was that of a good organization man, and he was more than once denounced by reformers. Even his handling of the slavery question was that of a politician, not that of a fanatic. Nothing alarmed him more than the suspicion that he was an Abolitionist. Barton tells of an occasion when he actually fled town to avoid meeting the issue squarely. A genuine Abolitionist would have published the Emancipation Proclamation the day after the first battle of Bull Run. But Lincoln waited until the time was more favorable—until Lee had been hurled out of Pennsylvania, and, more important still, until the political currents were safely running his way. Always he was a wary fellow, both in his dealings with measures and in his dealings with men. He knew how to keep his mouth shut.

Nevertheless, it was his eloquence that probably brought him to his great estate. Like William Jennings Bryan, he was a dark horse made suddenly formidable by fortunate rhetoric. The Douglas debate launched him, and the Cooper Union speech got him the presidency. This talent for emotional utterance, this gift for making phrases that enchanted the plain people, was an accomplishment of late growth. His early speeches were mere empty fireworks—the childish rhodomontades of the era. But in middle life he purged his style of ornament and became almost baldly simple—and it is for that simplicity that he is remembered today. The Gettysburg speech is at once the shortest and the most famous oration

in American history. Put beside it, all the whoopings and snortings of the Websters, Sumners and Everetts seem gaudy and silly. It is eloquence brought to a pellucid and almost child-like perfection—the highest emotion reduced to one graceful and irresistible gesture. Nothing quite like it is to be found in the whole range of oratory. Lincoln himself never even remotely approached it. It is genuinely stupendous.

But let us not forget that it is oratory, not logic; beauty, not sense. Think of the argument in it! Put it into the cold words of everyday! The doctrine is simply this: that the Union soldiers who died at Gettysburg sacrificed their lives to the cause of self-determination—"that government of the people, by the people, for the people," should not perish from the earth. It is difficult to imagine anything more untrue. The Union soldiers in that battle actually fought *against* self-determination; it was the Confederates who fought for the right of their people to govern themselves. What was the practical effect of the battle of Gettysburg? What else than the destruction of the old sovereignty of the States, *i.e.*, of the people of the States? The Confederates went into battle an absolutely free people; they came out with their freedom subject to the supervision and veto of the rest of the country—and for nearly twenty years that veto was so effective that they enjoyed scarcely any freedom at all. Am I the first American to note the fundamental nonsensicality of the Gettysburg address? If so, I plead my æsthetic joy in it in amelioration of the sacrilege. Abe was simply a democratic politician, talking to a democratic people. He knew their gigantic delight in the palpably absurd, their infinite capacity for logical imbecilities. In any case, he sinned in that department a good deal less than his successors. Think of the endless balderdash of Dr. Wilson—his dogged and almost heroic fidelity to the obviously not true, his infinite pains to construct contradictions in terms, his eloquent pleas for principles that he is simul-

taneously hoofing and miring! Compared to Woodrow, Abe had a mathematical mind.

A few paragraphs back I coupled him with Whitman. Walt was another wobbly logician, another man unable to see any necessary connection between a word and an idea—and he is, to this day, another victim of incompetent biographers. On the one hand there is a school that makes him out a sort of moral moron, and on the other hand there is a school that depicts him as a benign old papa, distinguishable from a Methodist bishop only by his superior virtue. I have just read Léon Bazalgette's biography of him, "Walt Whitman: the Man and His Work," translated from the French by Ellen FitzGerald (*Double-day*), a Chicago school-teacher. The work of Bazalgette is typically Gallic—a series of sonorous lyrics, touching the facts only occasionally, and, as it were, by accident. Miss FitzGerald has made it fit for Garden City by "abridging M. Bazalgette's treatment of the New Orleans episode" and by "lightening his emphasis on the 'Leaves of Grass' conflict"—in other words, by giving poor old Walt yet another coat of kalsomine. Who will do a decent biography of him, as honest and illuminating, say, as Frank Harris' biography of Oscar Wilde or Trevelyan's biography of Macaulay? Horace Traubel was never equal to the job. The most he could accomplish was a Boswellian farrago—amusing and even instructive, but surely not comprehensive and accurate. Now Horace himself is put into a book, "Horace Traubel: His Life and Work," by David Karsner (*Arens*). A labor of love—but it leaves poor Horace empty and inconsequential and a bit pathetic. As a poet, he went a step further than Walt. He set up *don't* as a singular verb. One does what one can.

III

March 20.

THE late Leo Tolstoy's "The Pathway of Life" (*International*), laboriously clawed into English by Archibald

J. Wolfe, is precisely the sort of book that one might imagine the great Russian chautauquan keeping by his bedside, to be resorted to for solace whenever nightmares awakened him and the sorrows of the world gnawed his liver. That is to say, it is a huge compendium of ethical and theological mush, partly by Tolstoy himself and partly by other sages. The ideas running through it are those of the average Methodist evangelist of the Iowa backwoods. The one and only duty of man is to please God; all other duties are illusory and of the devil. So far, so good. But how is one to determine what is pleasing to God? Here the venerable bosh-monger is far from clear, but one may at least guess at his general answer. Whatever is unpleasant to man is pleasant to God. The test is the natural instinct of man. If there arises within one's dark recesses a hot desire to do this or that, then it is the paramount duty of a Christian to avoid doing this or that. And if, on the contrary, one cherishes an abhorrence of the business, then one must tackle it forthwith, at the time shouting "Hallelujah!" A simple enough religion, surely—simple, satisfying, and idiotic. No wonder Tolstoy is the hero of Russian *mushiks* and American Socialists!

The old rat-trap had a bold spirit: he never tried to evade the necessary implications of his doctrine. For example, consider the matter of sex. Tolstoy believed and taught that passion was unqualifiedly evil—that it was a sin against the holy ghost to cast a friendly eye upon a pretty girl, or even upon one's lawful wife. His disciples, poll-parroting this imbecile idea, quickly got into difficulties. What it inevitably led to was the advocacy of race suicide upon a colossal scale. No passion, no *Stammhalter*. But Tolstoy himself never bucked at this dilemma. Instead he boldly seized both horns, took a long breath, and emerged with the doctrine that the human race should be, must be, and of a right ought to be exterminated. Here I had better leave him. His notions begin to seduce me. . . . The Wolfe translation is hideously bound.

IV

March 22.

ESSAYS today, a day of gray, wet skies—and nearly all of them bad. There is little in "Modes and Morals," by Katharine Fullerton Gerould (*Scribner*) save manner, to wit, the manner of the *Atlantic Monthly* at its feeblest, the manner of Agnes Repplier. One has the feeling of being at a tea-party with a crowd of young professors—devilish bucks who read Chesterton, smoke *Camels* in the drawing-room, sniff at democracy (within, of course, the limits of decency and the Espionage Act), and are not above shocking the ladies with a few bold epigrams upon the subject of birth control. It is a form of literature that I am constitutionally unable to consume with zest. However, one may be *simpatico* with the author if not with the book. When Mrs. Gerould confesses to a shameful delight in Methodist gospel hymns I answer with hosannahs. But if she knows and loves "Throw Out the Life-Line," then how has she missed "The Lion of Judea," "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus" and "Are You Ready for the Judgment Day?" The last-named is the very heart's juice and quintessence of Methodism, white and black. It is almost impossible to imagine a connoisseur of evangelical hymnody standing in ignorance of it. As well talk of a Bavarian ignorant of "Kommt a' Vogel Geflogen." I learnt it from the Moors in earliest infancy, and I shall probably intone it upon the gallows. It is my *Katzenjammer* hymn. That is to say, it runs through my head horribly from dawn to dark of every Monday following a Sunday on which I have encountered one who likes to entertain the *litterati* and has a few cases of Bernkasteler Doctor set aside for them, or maybe an honest jug of Tinta Cão, or an *Achtel* of surviving Pilsner, or a globe of Chianti, or perhaps nothing more tasty (the word is in Cassell!) than a bottle of synthetic Martini cocktails, loathsome but satisfying. A horrible song to God—but somehow fascinating.

No doubt the Methodists, after all, have blood in them. Their psychic hairshirts do not deceive me. I have heard them sing.

But, as I say, Mrs. Gerould's book of essays is hollow stuff—kittenish but correct. The same flabbiness is in "Peeps at People" and "Broome Street Straws," by Robert Cortes Holliday (*Doran*); "A Lover of the Chair," by Sherlock Bronson Gass (*Jones*), and "Mince Pie," by Christopher Morley (*Doran*). Morley and Holliday constitute a school, with a portrait of Charles Lamb hanging on the wall. I lament that such stuff as they now manufacture afflicts me with a great somnolence. What, indeed, could be more trivial and uninspired than the short pieces in Holliday's "Peeps at People"? Or than such things as "Trials of a President Traveling Abroad" and "Diary of a Publisher's Office-Boy" in Morley's "Mince Pie"? That sort of thing inevitably suggests the heavy whimsicality of *Life* and the other barber-shop weeklies. It is a standing refutation of the notion that Americans have a sense of humor. Morley, when he began, showed a promise of doing genuinely clever work. But it seems to me that he blew up when he took the shilling of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. Surely there is nothing in "Mince Pie" save the obvious and the depressing.

V

March 24.

ALL day plowing through huge, fat books. Henry Watterson's autobiography, by name "Marse Henry" (*Doran*), runs to two volumes and weighs four pounds. A charming old fellow—roguish, prejudiced, waggish, truculent—but his book is plainly third-rate. It is seldom, indeed, that he says anything worth hearing. One marvels that a man of such enormous experience in the world should have brought back so little wisdom. Sir Ernest Shackleton's "South!" (*Macmillan*) is still worse. A stupendous story of adventure—but by a man who doesn't know

how to tell it. "What to See in America," by Clifton Johnson (*Macmillan*), weighs two pounds and two ounces. An elaborate picture book with very dull text. "Adventures of a Nature Guide," by Enos A. Mills (*Doubleday*). Travel corrupted by moral purpose. Climbing the Rockies, it appears, is uplifting—a grand means of promoting the national virtue. "The Complete Opera Book," by the late Gustav Kobbé (*Putnam*). An encyclopedia of opera lore, sound and unsound, important and unimportant. There are still many gaps in it, but it is nevertheless the best thing of its sort. "A Quaker Singer's Recollections," by David Bispham (*Macmillan*). Amiable, honest, often amusing. "The Life of Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson," by Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez (*Scribner*). Another reboiling of the dry bones of R. L. S. "The Book of the Damned," by Charles Fort (*Boni-Liveright*). Solemn, prodigious, intolerable bosh. "Studies in Spanish-American Literature," by Isaac Goldberg (*Brentano*). A well-informed and useful work; I must review it later on. "The Vital Message," by Arthur Conan Doyle (*Doran*). More spiritualistic blather. "Liberalism in America," by Harold Stearns (*Boni*)

Here are clearer waters. This Stearns book, indeed, is a capital piece of work—temperate, well-informed, well-reasoned, extremely well-written. What could be more amusing than the rage with which the professional Liberals have fallen upon it—particularly Walter Lippmann in the *New Republic*? The thing deftly and devastatingly exposes the essential weakness of Lippmann and of all his *Corpsbrüder*. The Liberalism they gabble of is dead, and they themselves killed it. That Liberalism, I believe, was not a natural growth, and never quite healthy or even honest. It was based upon false assumptions and adored with imbecile conclusions. Stearns offers a brand that is, at all events, more logical and persuasive. His book stands absolutely alone in America.



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